



HELICOPTER NOISE COALITION OF NEW YORK CITY (HNC)

ADDENDUM TO APPENDIX (submitted 9/20/2000)

Comments to Docket No. 30086 - FAA Study
to Reduce Effects of Nonmilitary
Helicopter Noise

295

October 10, 2000

Additional Letters Page 454

Additional Articles, including

Legal and Safety Page 464 -
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Joy A. Helal

Joy A. Held,

President

2000 OCT 12 P 3:09

OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF COUNSEL
RULES DOCKET



CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 4
31 WEST 42ND STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036
TEL 736-4506 FAX 947-9512

JO ANN MACY
CHAIR

JESSICA GREER
DISTRICT MANAGER

Community
Board 4
Letter

May 15, 1997

Hon. Rudolph W. Giuliani
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Helicopters Over New York City

Dear Mayor Giuliani:

A person's home is his or her castle. And here in New York City's densely populated Clinton and Chelsea areas, our few parks and open spaces are our back yards. The now constant roar of helicopters over our heads is an invasion of our right to be free from loud and unsafe intrusion. From Manhattan's four heliports alone, the City now gets to hear over 140,000 flights annually (we cannot even hazard to guess the number of operations in excess of this figure that are generated from our neighboring heliports located in New Jersey and Connecticut). Sightseeing alone generates 73,339 flights over New York City and its waterways; the corporate world generates over 60,852.

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 opposes this continued use of our air space over New York City by helicopter traffic except for emergency use. In responding to the City Administration's argument justifying this intrusion, i.e. that it is needed for the economic well being of New York City, this Board:

- o Rejects the idea that a tourist will not come to the Big Apple because there is no helicopter sightseeing available - our waterways and tour buses as well as the City's subways and buses are great ways to see New York
- o Rejects the idea that the corporate world requires four heliports for their convenience in entering and leaving Manhattan - four heliports are not a make-or-break factor for New York in its competition for business and industry

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Hon. Rudolph W. Giuliani

May 15, 1997

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- o Rejects the idea that the corporate world of TV and radio needs to circle overhead for hours to be ready for a story nor does it need to hover over Manhattan to film the sunrise for its morning shows.

And, we could go on.

In addition, helicopter safety issues have justifiably alarmed us. There can be no balancing act between economics and safety - safety must always be first and foremost in the minds and actions of each of us.

The recent crash at the East 60th Street heliport is a frightening and ugly reminder of what can happen. What would have been the scene if the crash had occurred over Central Park instead of the East River? Over Stuyvesant Town? Over Brooklyn Heights? Over Shea Stadium? Over the Intrepid Museum? At our West 30th Street Heliport? That heliport literally abuts the West Side Highway, one of the most heavily trafficked roads on the East Coast. That heliport is also located within our Hudson River waterside parklands.

West 30th Street's heliport traffic (approximately 60% of which is tourist) has aggravated thousands of residents in the Chelsea and Clinton communities. We urge you to ban helicopters over New York City and its waterways except for emergency uses.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Macy

Chair

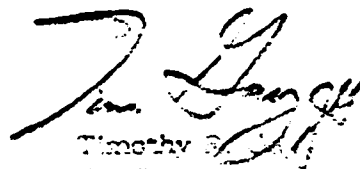
Community Board No. 4



Mary Dorman

Co-Chair

Quality-of-Life Committee



Timothy B. Lough

Co-Chair

Quality-of-Life Committee

HNC 455

Manhattan
Upper West Side

October 7, 1997

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani
City Hall
New York, N.Y. 10007

Dear Mayor Giuliani:

On September 16th I attended a meeting about your Master Plan for Helicopters presented by the EDC. The chairperson began by announcing "There will always be helicopters", which was her way of letting us know that your Master Plan was promising us not less, but more helicopters. The message came across as loud and clear as the awful, incessant noise outside my windows: the Giuliani administration gives economic development top priority, and the people be damned; or the end justifies the means.

This attitude is absolutely unacceptable. We have had successful economic development in the past as well as a livable city (a.k.a. "quality of life"). It does not have to be one extreme or the other, any more than a lower crime rate requires brutal and murderous cops.

Prior to 1995, jets and helicopters flew around the city, not over it. Manhattan is such a miniscule sliver of land that it must take only a few minutes more to detour around it. This city is too important for airlines, helicopters or corporate executives to abandon it if they are not given carte blanche to fly anywhere they please.

The newly pervasive din (which happens to coincide with your term of office) from appallingly low-flying jets and ever-bigger and noisier helicopters criss-crossing and circling our skies, is destroying our city. A June 4th letter from the FAA relayed to me by Senator Moynihan, claimed that they would keep planes away from NYC outdoor cultural events. Quite the opposite happened at the two subsequent such performances I attended: the expensive Lincoln Center Festival production of "Les Danaïdes", featuring 100 imported actors and a specially designed outdoor theatre, was spoiled by helicopters; and helicopters hovering overhead completely drowned out the orchestra and singers at the end of "On the Town" at the Delacorte Theatre.

new york, ny 10024

(212) 877-7836

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I came to live in New York because I love it, and at least until a year or two ago, I felt very pleased and lucky at the life I had achieved here, and believed, in all honesty, that I had contributed something in the process. I pay substantial property taxes and support the NY Shakespeare Festival and the Metropolitan Museum, but more than that, I have been very active in the revival of the Upper West Side, which was still considered a slum when we bought a house here in 1967. We welcomed newcomers to our home to encourage them to purchase houses, planted trees, upgraded street lights, ran the block association, and I served on the Board of the Brownstone Revival Committee, plus a term or so as president. More recently, I worked dilligently with Landmark West to obtain Historic District designation for the Upper West Side, and am still serving on its board and Certificate of Appropriateness Committee. And by the way, in mid-August, acting for Landmark West, I hosted a group from an Atlanta real estate company, who flew up for the day to look at our brownstones in order to copy them in a large development they are planning in their city.

In 1972 I wrote the first book published on renovating old city houses, and that book is among seven in my name listed in the main branch of the NY Public Library. (I have also worked as an artist and illustrator, as well as a couple of years for a lecture bureau.)

But the pleasure in enjoying my house for what remains of my life has been shattered by the horrendous noise, pollution and danger of low-flying planes invading our skies. Until the last year or so, it was so totally peaceful and quiet in my rear bedroom and garden (and in the center of Central Park) that visitors couldn't believe it. Now there is nowhere in the city to find peace and quiet. Instead of leaving bedroom windows open at night, the only way I can sleep is to shut windows plus storm windows, and keep the air conditioner running all night throughout the winter. As for the garden, forget about it.

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Do you really want to drive away the people who make New York special? People who are often actively involved in creative life and cultural events, and who make things happen? Because the people I saw passionately speaking out against helicopters at the September 16th meeting were well-educated, intelligent, well-to-do citizens, tax-payers like me, and some of them probably considerably wealthier. All of us were angry.

I would like very much to be able to continue supporting you. You have the potential for establishing a great record. But no matter how low the crime rate, or high the economic development, you can't do it by riding rough-shod over people's lives. Though you may think that the soaring real estate boom means that all's right with the world, you should know that an owner of one of those expensive apartments contributed \$15,000 to the Coalition Against Helicopter Noise!

cc: Dr. Arline Bronzaft, Council on the
Environment

Joy Held, Coalition Against Helicopter Noise

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FAX FAX FAX

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November 26, 1997

Ms. Jean McFaddin
Group Vice President
Macy's Special Events
151 West 34th Street
New York, NY 10001

**Re: Helicopter Coverage of Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade
November 27, 1997 and beyond**

Dear Ms. McFaddin:

Am writing this to you at the suggestion of Ms. Elizabeth Davis at NBC regarding the helicopter coverage of your famous parade.

I have also spoken with Mr. Mark Schonberg about this situation.

Since I can remember, I along with countless other New Yorkers and others have enjoyed the famous Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade immensely. It is a generous gift that Macy's keeps on giving.

In the past several years, helicopter coverage has made it almost unpleasant to attend the parade due to the lack of safety and din of the rotors constantly intruding on one's enjoyment. I personally do not watch anymore.

It saddens me to think of any craft deployment taking away the "joy" of your parade--as isn't this what's is all about.

Am hoping that the points in my letter can be addressed as a starter.

Maybe one of these years, I, too, will feel comfortable and "safe" once again attending your Parade.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Hv

HWC 459



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 4
330 WEST 42ND STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036
TEL. 736-4536 FAX 947-9512

PAMELA FREDERICK

CHAIR

JESSICA GREER

DISTRICT MANAGER

January 9, 1998

Hon. John B. Daly
NYS Department of Transportation
5 Governor Harriman State Campus
Albany, NY 12232

Alvin S. Trenk, President
Air Pegasus
25-B Vreeland Road
PO Box 99
Florham Park, NJ 07932

Re: December 30, 1997, Helicopter Crash at West 30th Street Heliport

Dear Sirs:

The helicopter crash that occurred on December 30, 1997, was the second such incident at the West 30th Street heliport in the last six months. These incidents, together with the April 15, 1997, crash at East 60th Street, are responsible for one dead and at least eleven injured.

These incidents may have been caused by a number of factors, including pilot error, weather, equipment, or inherently unsafe conditions at the heliport; the actual cause in each case remains to be determined by the National Transportation Safety Board. Whatever ultimately is determined to be the cause of these incidents, however, they raise grave concerns among the residents of our community, and, we have no doubt, the residents of all communities in which heliports are sited or are scheduled to be sited.

We believe that a meeting with all of the concerned parties should be scheduled to address these concerns. Among the points we want to discuss are:

1. Your evaluation of the safety of 30th Street in light of the recent accidents. The close proximity of the accident to the highway, and its bikeway/walkway, raises particular concerns.

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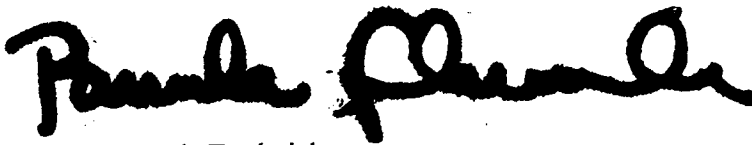
Hon. John B. Daly and Alvin S. Trenk
January 9, 1998
Page Two

2. Increased helicopter traffic, its effects (decreased safety, increased noise, etc.), and any strategies that might be implemented to reverse or eliminate these negative effects. Since the Fall of 1997, we have seen a substantial increase in helicopter traffic on the Hudson River due to (i) the closing of East 34th Street, and (ii) the prohibition of tourist flights over the East River. The result of these two decisions has been to shift sightseeing traffic to the Hudson River corridor, dramatically increasing traffic over the west side, including Chelsea and Clinton.
3. The impending diminishment of available space at 30th Street. The West 30th Street Heliport site has long been criticized as too narrow and too close to the highway. The forthcoming Route 9A construction which is scheduled to commence mid-year will reduce the width of this already narrow area so as to render it almost unusable. We would like to hear your plans for dealing with this reconfiguration of the heliport (if any).

Many in the community are alarmed by the recent events at 30th Street. We hope to initiate a constructive dialogue on these and related issues that might help to allay concerns and to promote a careful evaluation of the future of heliport operations at 30th Street.

Robert Gregory, Chair of the Waterfront Committee, will be contacting both of you shortly to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,



Pamela Frederick
Chair
Community Board No. 4

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Hon. John B. Daly and Alvin S. Trenk

January 9, 1998

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cc: Hon. Rudolph Giuliani, Mayor
Hon. C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, United States Representative
Hon. Catherine Abate, State Senator
Hon. Franz Leichter, State Senator
Hon. Deborah Glick, State Assemblymember
Hon. Richard Gottfried, State Assemblymember
Hon. Scott Stringer, State Assemblymember
Hon. Tom Duane, City Councilmember
Hon. Ronnie Eldridge, City Councilmember
Hon. James Ortensio, Hudson River Park Conservancy
Connie Fishman, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Planning's Office
Pepi Ertag, Manhattan Borough President's Office
Shirley Jaffe, NYC Economic Development Corporation
Al Butzel, Hudson River Park Alliance
Sonia Rivera, Route 9A Project
Joy A. Held, Helicopter Noise Coalition of New York City

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**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN**

**C. VIRGINIA FIELDS
BOROUGH PRESIDENT**

November 10, 1998

Hon. Arlene Feldman
Regional Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration, Eastern Region
Fitzgerald Federal Building
JFK International Airport
Jamaica, NY 11430

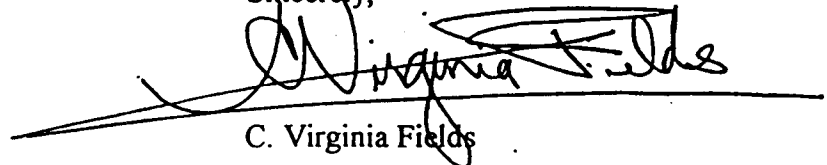
Dear Ms. Feldman:

I write concerning the upcoming Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and the inevitable swarm of television helicopters that will undoubtedly cover it.

As you are well aware, Macy's wonderful annual parade attracts a huge audience on the ground all along the parade route. Ensuring their safety so that everyone can enjoy the parade is an objective I know we share. With respect to the helicopters flying over the parade, I am concerned that they maintain an altitude sufficient to ensure the safety of the crowd in the unlikely event that an emergency landing is required. Toward this goal, I ask that the FAA's Eastern Region work with the media companies using helicopters to establish and observe a safe altitude over the parade.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and request that the appropriate person inform Timothy Forker of my staff at (212) 669-8136 of the altitude limits to be observed at the parade.

Sincerely,



C. Virginia Fields

C: Hon. Charles Millard, NYC EDC
Manhattan Helicopter Task Force

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Letters to the Editor

Impact From Aircraft Noise

On April 25, 1996, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) restructured airline routes to reduce the levels of aircraft noise in Scotch Plains, and surrounding areas of Union County. This new plan, called the Solberg Mitigation Proposal, moved Newark Airport's westbound departures from a path that took them over Plainfield, Scotch Plains, and Berkeley Heights, and shifted these flights further south, to Colonia. Here they make a turn to the west, and out toward Solberg Airport, near Readington, N.J.

I noticed the change on the morning of July 4th, 1996. There were severe thunderstorms during the evening of July 3rd. Air traffic was delayed until these storms had cleared the area. At 1:00 A.M. a series of approximately 20 extremely loud jets started taking off, one right after the other. This continuous barrage of intense noise continued until 2 A.M. This is when I started to become aware of the problem.

During the summer of '96, my sleep was interrupted every night. Extremely loud jets at late evening hours became a routine occurrence. Newark departures would pass by at two minute intervals, sometimes past midnight. It would begin again at 5:30 A.M. Every morning I was abruptly woken up by the intense rumbling and by the rattling from my windows. I was walking around all day confused, tired and angry. I felt run down all the time.

During the day the noise was continuous. At times, you could not hear the person talking to you at three feet away. On the morning of September 9, 1996 I was injured by jet noise. While talking to my neighbor, a jet came by that sounded like a rocket. I felt pain inside my ears and ran inside the house. Later that day, the constant ringing started. I scheduled an appointment with a hearing doctor that afternoon. After several visits, the tests revealed that there had been a temporary 10-15 dB overall hearing loss in both ears. My left ear did not recover as well and has some degree of permanent hearing loss.

My house was also being affected by this constant assault from the air. When the Pope and the President were in the area, the low frequencies produced by their helicopters caused several windows to crack. The entire house and everything in it, was shaken vigorously for minutes. This type of vibration has now become routine with commercial and medivac helicopter flights. The amount of force needed to shake a house is staggering. These aircraft have engines rated in thousands of horsepower. Their lift is generated by pushing down

with every revolution of propeller. The pulsating action of the noise, in combination with structural resonance (natural amplification), produces severe vibrations equivalent to powerful earthquakes. With Newark's inbound jet traffic being routed over Merrill Park as low as 1500 feet (confirmed with radar reports obtained under the Freedom of Information Act), the commercial helicopters are forced to fly 500 feet and below.

The type of vibration from jet aircraft noise also has a detrimental effect on the house. Put your hand on the window glass the next time you hear that loud deep rumble. The vibrations are not confined to the windows. The entire surface of your house is subjected to these vibrations. They produce hairline cracks that are worked on up to two hundred times a day. You soon have larger and more numerous cracks. The entire structure is being wiggled loose, the nails don't hold, and the heads stick out.

This type of structural damage is peculiar, in that it is confined mostly to the upper level of the house. I sent questionnaires to my neighbors. The results were that many of the homes in my area had similar types of vibration damages.

The things homeowners should be looking for are:

1. Cracks in the walls and paint around windows, door jambs, ceilings and corners, more numerous and pronounced on the upper level of a house. Nails popping out. Reoccurring cracks that cannot be repaired.
2. Cracked windows, cracked grout, tiles falling out.
3. Flashing failure at the roof (leaks as well as ants), especially at the chimney, premature roof failure.

Although these types of damages mimic the other types of wear and tear that houses experience, the aggressive nature in which these damages are occurring, are directly related to the intensity, and number of aviation induced vibrations. I started documenting the cracks on a daily basis, and have kept a continuous log of all aircraft activity since late December 1996. I will share this and other claims information with anyone interested.

Start taking a hard look at your house. Put your fingers in your ears if you are caught outside when a loud jet flies over. The FAA, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and Newark International Airport doesn't care if you are injured, if the quality of your life has declined, or if your house is damaged, because nobody is making them accountable for what they have done.

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AIR DISASTER: Wreckage (above) is all that remains of a Sikorsky helicopter (below) that crashed yesterday during testing in Connecticut. The craft had been slated for White House use.



4 dead in crash of test-flight copter

Four people were killed yesterday when a Marine helicopter set to be used by the White House crashed in a thunderous cloud of black smoke after taking off on a test flight in Connecticut.

Workers at Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford — and motorists passing the company's airfield — gasped in horror as the military transport copter struggled, and then hurtled back to the earth shortly after 11 a.m.

"I saw it start going up, and the next thing there was a big boom... it shook our building, it crashed, and there was smoke billowing out all over," said Mary Beth Desrosiers, a clerk at the Oronoque Pharmacy across the street from the plant.

John Nasufi, the owner of a restaurant across from the Sikorsky plant, said he saw the craft do "a back flip."

"And then there was a thick, black cloud of smoke... it went down so fast," he said. No one on the ground was hurt.

The helicopter was being operated by four Sikorsky employees doing an "acceptance flight." Their identities were withheld pending notification of relatives.

Officials said the copter was assigned to a Marine unit at Quantico, Va., which provides support services for the White House. Such services do not include carrying the president.

The CH-53E, built by Sikorsky and known as a "Super Stallion," is a three-engine, heavy-lift helicopter that can carry 56 people and is used by both the Marines and Navy. *Cathy Burke*

October 11, 1996

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LETTERS

In a Whirl Over Copters

To the Editor:

It is wonderful news to hear that helicopters are restricted from flying at low levels over or near the city, and that they must fly over the river ("Accord Should Reduce Noisy Choppers," Oct. 4). What a load of horse muffins this is!

I live on the top floor of an apartment building on Riverside Drive. All day, all night at all hours, these airborne locomotives fly along at close proximity to the island of Manhattan, disturbing the sleep and peace of thousands of people as they go. The noise is so loud sometimes that you can't hear the TV or talk on the phone.

What private helicopter pilot cares about those asleep below? The Hudson River is quite wide. They should use the air space over the river and let the millions who dwell below live in peace.

"Sleepless on the Upper West Side"

HWC 466

QUALITY OF LIFE

COURTS STRIKE CHOPPER PLAN FROM BOOKS

Helicopters will be flying free, thanks to a court ruling that lifts restrictions placed on flights leaving the 34th Street Heliport.

Last Friday, the Federal District Court of New York barred the city from imposing any air traffic restrictions on the heliport, long an anathema to the surrounding community.

East Side Briefs

"This decision is really an outrage," said East Side Councilman Andrew S. Eristoff, a vocal advocate for air traffic restriction. "I felt that it was bending over backwards to accommodate the helicopter company. It's just a travesty."

In operation on 34th Street for 28 years, the heliport has long been cited by many local residents as a continual source of noise and air pollution.

The controversy escalated in the past decade as the residential population exploded, in part due to the 1986 opening of Rivergate, a 35-story apartment complex. But many also contend that the heliport is a virtually unregulated enterprise that has continue to produce more traffic and pollution with little regard for its neighbors.

"The machines are getting larger, the gasoline is stronger, the motors more intense — it's quite horrific," said Micky Egeth, a local resident for 31 years and former executive vice president in charge of community affairs at MECA (Manhattan East Community Association). "The fact that a city would allow a heliport in a place like this is something that boggles our mind."

Eristoff said Friday's judgment is predicated on a set of federal laws that reserve the federal government's right to regulate air space, preventing a proliferation of local restrictions that would compromise air commerce and safety.

"I appreciate that the Feds have a

right to airspace regulation," Eristoff said. "But there is plenty of room under the federal umbrella for localities to exercise their right as owners of a heliport facility to impose reasonable restrictions that protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens."

A spokesman for National Helicopter had no comment pending a legal review of the ruling.

For many, the impact of the heliport is compounded by its proximity to a number of hospitals and medical centers. "The arrangement is a total disregard to public interest," said Martin Begun, a dean at NYU Medical Center. "It's a hospital zone, a residential zone. The heliport has no public virtue. We've already spent hundred of thousands of dollars for filters to protect the operating room. It's an enormous burden on the medical center and to patients."

The community has tried to reason with the heliport before, resulting in a number of "gentleman's agreements." In 1989, National Helicopter agreed to close the heliport for non emergency operations from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. But in 1996, City Council tried to secure a number of additional restrictions in exchange for renewing its lease. Restrictions included reducing air traffic by 47 percent, prohibiting flights over Second Avenue, banning Saturday operations after January 1997 and banning Sunday operations after January 1998. In response to these measures, National Helicopter took the city to court in May of 1996, citing constitutional violations of the federal air traffic laws. The current ruling only upholds an 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. weekday curfew on all flights and a 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. weekend curfew on sightseeing flights.

Eristoff believes that the city must pursue an appeal. "The heliport has become totally incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood," he said. "At this point, I think that we should seriously consider abandoning any effort to live in harmony with the heliport and just shut it down."

—David Bahr

COURT REJECTS CHOPPER PLAN, P. 6 •]

HNC 467

OUR TOWN

EDITORIAL

CHOPPER SAGA CONTINUES

Residents who live near the 34th Street Heliport should brace themselves for more hovering helicopters in the future. After trying to reduce the number of flights allowed at the heliport, the city was dealt a blow last Friday with a court decision that lifts almost all city-imposed restrictions at the heliport.

Federal Judge Sonia Sotomayor ruled that the city does not have the right to place restrictions on how helicopters use the skies — because skies are federal, not local, property.

This is bad news for the noise-annoyed residents around 34th Street who have complained for years that noise from local choppers has made their lives unbearable. And it doesn't bode well for Manhattan residents at large, who can expect to see more choppers hovering over their neighborhoods in the months to come.

This case bears some striking resemblance to the recently concluded Toys 'R' Us battle, in which two state courts reversed a city decision that banned a megastore from opening on a residential side street.

Once again, it seems that the city should have more say in how its property is used.

Councilman Andrew Fristoff, a staunch defender of limiting helicopter traffic, has intimated the city will appeal this recent decision. We applaud that notion. Unlike a new agreement arranged by Borough President Ruth Messinger's office which re-routes sightseeing whirlybirds, voluntary agreements between National Helicopter and the city have not appeared to be successful in the past.

Given the residential density of Manhattan, the city should have the right to control the noise-generating industries that reside there. May the case of the 34th Street Heliport become proof of the pudding.

Copter Restrictions Shot Down

A federal court last week struck down nearly all the restrictions the city has imposed on sightseeing helicopters.

The helicopter over-flights are a source of outrage among apartment dwellers who live under popular routes over Manhattan. They complain that the flights are excessively noisy and intrusive, especially early in the morning and late at night.

Citing federal supremacy, federal district court Judge Sonia Sotomayor, ruled that only the Federal Aviation Administration could impose flight restrictions, and struck down several rules imposed by the City Council in 1996. These rules included a 47-percent reduction in flights, the gradual elimination of all weekend sightseeing flights by summer 1998, the restriction of sightseeing flights to designated routes, the mandate that helicopters be marked for easy identification from the ground, and the exclusion from sightseeing of 14-seat Sikorsky S-58T helicopters, which opponents say are particularly noisy. The court let stand a flight curfew between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. on weekdays, and 6 p.m. and 10 a.m. on weekends.

"I am extremely disappointed and appalled," said Councilman Andrew Eristoff, who fought for the restrictions after complaints from the 62nd Street heliport. Noting that the city owns the heliport's land, Eristoff said the ruling means "if we [the city] are stupid enough to open a heliport, we can't control the way it is used."

A spokesman for National Helicopter,

which has leased the 34th Street Heliport from the city for 24 years and brought the lawsuit, declined to comment, saying that the company's lawyers were still reviewing the decision.

The silver lining is that voluntary restrictions agreed to by the operators won't be affected, said Lisa Daglian, a spokeswoman for Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, who was involved in negotiating those restrictions. Sightseeing helicopters now fly north over the East River to 86th Street, where they run west across Manhattan and return south over the Hudson River rather than flying directly above the avenues.

Both Eristoff and Messinger promised that the decision would be appealed, and both added that if all else fails, the city should simply close the heliport.

"The city should work with the FAA to develop restrictions that will protect the community from the effects of helicopter noise," Messinger said. "If that fails, I would support the city pursuing its only other option, which is to close the heliport."

That is the only solution that would placate Patricia Namm Saffran, a resident of 402 E. 65th St. at First Avenue. "It's like living in a war zone," she said, of the helicopters that buzz her house on a regular basis.

An appeal, or any other decision regarding the fate of the 34th Street Heliport, is in the hands of the city Economic Development Corporation, which leases the heliport to National Helicopter for some \$725,000 annually. An EDC spokesperson refused to comment on the agency's plans, saying only that they were reviewing Sotomayor's decision.

—Leo Jakobson

Copter Regs Shot Down

Court Ruling Flies in Face of City's Flight Restrictions

by Leo Jakobson

A federal court last week struck down nearly all the restrictions the city has imposed on sightseeing helicopters.

The helicopter overflights are a source of outrage among apartment dwellers who live along popular routes over Manhattan. They complain that the flights are excessively noisy and intrusive, especially early



A helicopter takes off from the 34th Street Heliport, which some politicians want closed.

in the morning and late at night.

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The silver lining is that voluntary restrictions agreed to by the operators won't be affected, said Lisa Daglian, a spokeswoman for Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, who was involved in negotiating the restrictions that went into effect last September. Sightseeing heli-

copters now fly north over the East River to 86th Street, where they run west across Manhattan and return south over the Hudson River rather than flying directly above the avenues.

Of course, not everyone considers that a silver lining. "It's a horrendous, mind-numbing noise," said Lorraine Heilweil, a 65-year-old resident of West 86th Street. "They've channelled all the noise onto 86th Street. I can't function. I can't take a nap. There have been three helicopters hovering over my house at once."

Heilweil is in the process of organizing residents of her block who want helicopter flights ended altogether. Nor is she the only one considering that option. Both Eristoff and Messinger promised that the deci-

sion would be appealed, and both added that if all else fails, the city should simply close the heliport.

"The city should work with the FAA to develop restrictions that will protect the community from the effects of helicopter noise," Messinger said. "If that fails, I would support the city pursuing its only other option, which is to close the heliport."

As for complaints about the effect on East 86th Street, Daglian added that the September agreement with the heliport is "a work in progress." She added that Messinger would be meeting with National Helicopter representatives again in February, and she hoped they would prove amenable to more compromise.

Daglian said she did not think the court ruling would derail voluntary agreements with National Helicopter, noting that during earlier talks with the company, "it became apparent they were not aware of the hardship they were causing people," and were anxious to resolve their differences.

An appeal, or any other decision regarding the fate of the 34th Street Heliport, is in the hands of the city Economic Development Corporation, which leases the heliport to National Helicopter for about \$725,000 annually. An EDC spokesman refused to comment on the agency's plans, saying only that they were reviewing judge Sotomayor's decision. ■

Lorraine Heilweil would like anyone affected by helicopter noise to call her at 799-9694. You can also call Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger's office at 669-8300.

Resident

Spring

1997

City Working on Copter Plan

They are causing nervous breakdowns. They are forcing residents to leave the city. They are hampering work schedules. They are closing businesses. What are they?

You got it — helicopters.

"The city doesn't realize the depth of feeling of people who are affected by these tours," said Patricia Namm Saffran, a helicopter opponent. "They don't realize that young professionals, young entrepreneurs, the lifeblood of the city really, are starting to move away and sell their condos and homes. It's really going to be a brain drain if [this continues]."

Formed in February, the Helicopter Noise Coalition, led by East 65th Street resident Joy Held, has already amassed a membership that includes individuals and community groups from three boroughs — Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn. The group has lobbied legislators, helicopter companies and practically anybody who will listen to their plight. Now, they are considering legal action.

"I was on the phone this morning with two lawyers," Held said on Tuesday.

Despite the degree of its involvement, the city does not have a comprehensive policy regarding helicopters and helicopter flights.

The city Economic Development Corporation, though, says it is developing a policy, which should take from six to eight months to complete. It is in the process of hiring a consultant who will do the kind of research — on the economic benefits of helicopters, on the noise levels associated with the flights and other information — that would be needed to formulate the policy.

But just how much can the city — can anyone — do to end the flights?

"We have to be sensitive about the legality [of any restrictions]," Joe Rose, director of the Department of City Planning, told a gathering of residents concerned about the helicopter issue on March 31. "We can't control who flies over the airspace in New York."

— Peter Duffy

Resident Vol 9, #24

HWC 471

Anti-Helicopter Group Gets Cash

An Upper West Side resident has donated \$10,000 to the Helicopter Noise Coalition of New York City to help in the group's fight to ban all helicopter traffic over the city.

The money was pledged by Robert W. Wilson.

"He gave the money to us because he's incensed at what helicopters are doing to New York City," said Joy Held, director of the group.

The group will use the money to pay for the production of its promotional materials — it has released 62- and 92-page packets documenting the helicopter problem — staff support and, if needed, legal fees. The Helicopter Noise Coalition is now in the process of incorporating itself as a not-for-profit agency.

Held said the group's membership is growing rapidly, with new interest focussed on Staten Island, where a number of residents have complained about helicopter noise.

The group is trying to convince community board's to condemn sightseeing helicopter flights. Community Board 7 has done so, and three additional boards, including CB 8, will vote on measures in upcoming meetings.

CB 7, in its resolution, called helicopter flights "intolerable" and that they result "in great emotional and physical stress."

HWC 472

EDITORIAL

Danger From the Skies

In this space last week, we discussed the appropriate path to take toward making the skies above the city safer for those who dwell underneath: pressure the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

After the fatal helicopter crash in the East River on April 15 – the same day last week's editorial was published – the message rings truer than ever.

At the risk of adding one more voice to the chorus of denunciations, that chopper could just as easily have crashed into a residential neighborhood. (The population of Community Board 4's district – containing the busy 30th Street heliport on the Hudson River – was found to have a population of 84,431 by the 1990 U.S. Census.) In last week's crash, the chopper's body, through sheer luck, landed in the water, but the tail section flew at high speed into a terminal building. It takes only slight imagination to picture the carnage if those tons of steel came down on a busy West Side street during rush hour.

New York City is truly an engineering marvel, and it's hard to blame tourists who want to catch an aerial view of this wonder of steel, stone and glass. We can't blame the tourists – we supply the helicopters and sell the tickets. We provide the opportunity for operators to profit from this menace above.

Tourism is one of New York City's largest sources of revenue. But is it profitable enough to jeopardize lives? That, perhaps, depends on who you ask.

The city's Helicopter Noise Coalition – which, despite its name, is concerned with safety and health issues, not just *noise* – is an alliance of activists and officials who are fed up with these profitable but non-essential and potentially dangerous flights. Well prior to last week's tragic incident, the coalition was warning that such was bound to happen eventually – and we actually got off rather lightly. Maybe now critics – and bureaucratic foot-draggers – will be more inclined to admit that the coalition has been right all along.

HNC 473

NEWS

What Solution?

City Closes Heliport, Boots Copter Co. From 34th Street As Plans for Massive Pier 76 Heliport Move Forward

by Peter Duffy

The city's decision to close the East 60th Street Heliport and evict a sightseeing helicopter company from the East 34th Street Heliport will likely lessen helicopter traffic in the two neighborhood surrounding those facilities.

But what about the West Side?

The West 30th Street Heliport is still operational and, the city said this week, plans are full steam ahead for the massive Pier 76 heliport, which when completed will replace the state-owned (and much smaller) West 30th Street facility.

Helicopter opponents argue that since plans for the Pier 76 project continue apace, the city has no intention of lessening helicopter traffic.

"What is the impact of getting rid of National [the sightseeing helicopter company based at East 34th Street] when three of the four heliports remain open and the mayor has planned to develop a mega-heliport at Pier 76 with far greater capacity than any of the existing heliports?" asked Joy Held, executive director of the Heliporter Noise Coalition.

Held said she feared that the action was "a bid for Mayor Giuliani to appear to respond to community concerns prior to

the election, with the hidden agenda to expand the industry in the future."

The city Economic Development Corporation is currently searching for a developer for the Pier 76 site, located at West 34th Street. A request for proposals was issued in January.

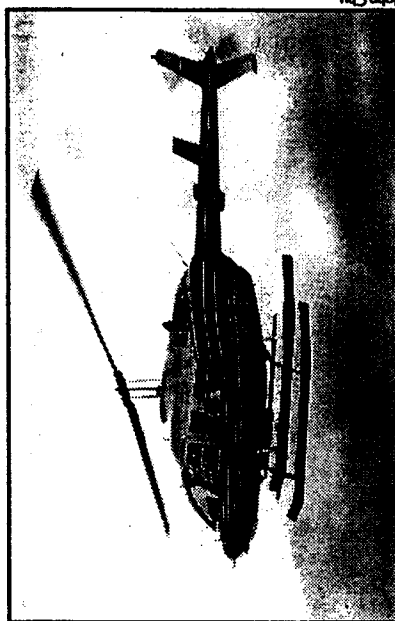
The EDC is also working on a helicopter master plan, which would set forth a comprehensive helicopter policy for the city. The plan will, the EDC said, "review the current status of all heliports and project future heliport scenarios for New York City." (A heliport is also located near Wall Street; it is owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.)

Andrew Berman, an aide to Councilman Tom Duane, who represents the Pier 76 area, said Duane is worried about the scope of the project.

"We are concerned about the impact it would have," said Berman. "We are hoping that this is still at a stage where we and the community can have an impact on

the plans."

The mayor said the closure of 60th Street and the eviction of National from East 34th Street will lessen helicopter traffic in the city by 30 to 40 percent. Johnson Controls, which operates the 60th Street Heliport, will move its operation to 34th Street. Unlike National, Johnson Controls doesn't offer sightseeing flights, which have been roundly condemned, because of the level of noise they create, by community groups and politicians.



How many choppers does it take to upset a neighborhood?

"Many New York residents have concerns about noise levels and public safety with regard to helicopters in the city," said Giuliani in a prepared statement. "I take these matters very seriously. The changes announced today will have the benefits of addressing these concerns and substantially alleviating helicopter traffic and noise."

Helicopter opponents say that the de-

velopment of Pier 76 would nullify any reduction in flights brought about by the mayor's action. "It will increase sightseeing traffic," said Held.

Community Board 4 expressed concern with the project as recently as January in a letter to then Deputy Mayor Fran Reiter. The board questioned "the city's assertion that a heliport is necessary on the West Side waterfront," and pointed to a number of issues of concern - regarding the design, operations and scope of the project.

The city "must eliminate as much as possible negative environmental impacts, in particular, noise and air pollution," wrote Jo Ann Macy, CB 4's chair. "The heliport must be a 'good neighbor' to its neighbors which include not only a major tourist/visitor industry, and our future waterfront park, but also a growing residential neighborhood."

CB 4 is particularly concerned because the heliport will be located within the Hudson River Park. "The need for very, very careful planning to mitigate the negative effects from heliport operations is indisputable."

Despite the concerns, Upper East Side Councilman Andrew Eristoff feels the city, in closing East 60th Street and scaling back operations at 34th Street, is moving toward a solution to the helicopter problem.

"The administration is sensitive to the growing level of complaints from residents all over the city about helicopter traffic and noise," he said. "The mayor is concerned about maintaining helicopter access for the corporate world but is less sympathetic to tourist traffic."

letters

Heliports Don't Have City Permits

The question of how New York City should handle the use of helicopters and heliports within its jurisdiction ("Chopper Sitdown," *Resident*, July 9) involves a variety of concerns, including acceptable levels of noise and the use of airspace over densely populated communities. One key question is whether or not the landing facilities now in use have the requisite permits from the city.

Reportedly, both the East 60th Street heliport and the East 34th Street heliport have been allowed by the city to operate for years without valid permits, which would now require extensive environmental review and public hearings. While this has been brought to the attention of city officials, helicopter flights continue unabated at these facilities.

To address this aspect of the problem, I have introduced legislation to make it a violation for a helicopter to land at a heliport (except in the case of an emergency or official government business) if such landing site does not possess a valid zoning permit. To put teeth in this prohibition, my bill sets out a fine of up to 10,000

imposed on the owner of the aircraft.

While I am working to pass the bill in the Assembly before we adjourn, so far I have not been able to secure a Senate sponsor, despite the fact that new bills are being introduced in that house every day.

*Assemblyman Pete Grannis
Upper East Side*

HWC 475

RESIDENT

MIDTOWN RESIDENT August 26 - September 1, 1997

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They're Baaaaaack!

National Helicopter, Newly Evicted from 34th Street Heliport, Sets Up Operations at Wall Street Heliport by Peter Duffy

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani announced back in April that the eviction of National Helicopter from the East 34th Street heliport would reduce helicopter flights in the city by 30 to 40 percent. But he didn't take one thing into consideration: National would simply move its operation to another heliport.

That's what happened this week.

After losing a federal court case to halt its eviction from the city-owned heliport, the sightseeing helicopter company began flying out of the Wall Street heliport, owned by the Port Authority of N.Y./N.J.

"It just shifts the problem from 34th Street down to my area," said downtown Councilwoman Kathryn Freed.

Since the Wall Street heliport is a public access facility, the Port Authority must, under federal law, allow National use of its space — even though the company still owes the city more than \$700,000 in back rent.

The Port Authority says it is well aware of National's troubled history and is doing what it can to limit the company's operations.

"We are requiring National to pay all fees at the time they are incurred," said Peter Yerkes, a Port Authority spokesman. "We turned down their request that we rent them office space and ticketing areas. We refused permission for nighttime and weekend operations. ... We are limiting their operations to the degree we are

allowed to by law and we are aware of the concerns that have been expressed by the city and the community."

Liberty Helicopters, another sightseeing company, currently flies out of the Wall Street heliport.

Peter McGann, president of Na-

tional Helicopter, and a press representative for Giuliani did not return phone calls for comment by press time.

The Helicopter Noise Coalition, which has filed a lawsuit against the city seeking the closure of the East 34th Street heliport, argues that the relocation of National to the downtown heliport will do nothing to alleviate community complaints over helicopter noise and worries over safety. The flight routes will likely remain the same — the choppers will fly over the same neighborhoods as they did previously.



Will helicopter move fly?

"No matter where they come from, helicopters in our airspace are a problem," said Joy Held, executive director of the coalition.

Brooklyn Heights residents are particularly concerned about increased operations at the Wall Street heliport, located just across the river from the upscale neighborhood. It was a major topic of discussion at Tuesday's meeting of the Brooklyn Helicopter Task Force, which includes public officials, residents and helicopter officials.

"We are worried that the ongoing problems are going to be exacerbated by an increase of flights at Wall Street," said one task force member.

In other helicopter developments, Johnson Controls, a helicopter company specializing in corporate flights, has begun flying out of the 34th Street heliport.

It also continues to fly out of the East 60th Street heliport, which the city has said it will close once the company has completely transferred its operation to 34th Street. Johnson Controls has recently changed its name to American Port Services.

The Helicopter Noise Coalition's lawsuit argues that the 34th Street Heliport must be closed because it violates noise levels set by the city's administrative code and because it operates without a special permit, which, under city zoning law is required to establish guidelines for its operation.

"Johnson Controls is going into 34th Street without a special permit, so this law-and-order mayor is flaunting the law," said Held. "... There has been no regard for the law here and it is absolutely outrageous. A citizen can't put garbage on the street on the wrong day. But here this company is allowed to go in there without a special permit and in complete violation of the statutes."

HWC 476

ROTORCRAFT

Years after it was first officially offered to customers, the Huey II program, created by Bell Helicopter Textron, has made firm inroads into the market. A deal between Bell and the Corporación de la Industria Aeronáutica (CIAA) of Bogotá, Colombia, a modernization program conducted by Bell and Lycoming, aimed at upgrading UH-1 utility helicopters, the Huey II program increases the UH-1's useful load by more than 600 lb and significantly enhances the operational capability of the aircraft, especially in high-altitude, hot-temperature environments such as the mountains of Colombia. Key to this performance boost is the upgrading of the helicopter's Lycoming T53-L-13B turboshaft engine by more than 400 shp. This upgrade converts the engine into the equivalent of an 1,800 shp T53-L-703. That additional power is made useful via corresponding upgrades to transmission, gearboxes and rotor blades—in short, the entire drive system and more. Under the terms of the deal between CIAA and Bell, a total of eight Colombian Air Force UH-1Hs will be upgraded to the Huey II configuration.

For the first time in recent memory, one of the helicopters of the elite U.S. Marine Corps VMX-1 reported a mechanical difficulty significant enough to ground a helo and postpone a Presidential flight. President Clinton was already aboard one of the Sikorsky HH-3s at Andrews Air Force Base just outside Washington, in early October, when its crew detected an abnormal vibration in its main rotor and decided to shut down the helicopter. A backup rotorcraft was brought up and the trip proceeded without incident. The flaw was later described as a "loss of rotor trim."

A presidential candidate for Honduras's ruling party wasn't as lucky in October, when the rotorcraft (make and model unknown) in which he was riding during a rural campaign trek crashed during landing. Carlos Flores and six companions were injured, the helicopter destroyed. According to accounts broadcast by Radio America, Flores fractured a portion of his back in the impact. The helicopter was reported to have hit power lines and trees before contacting the ground. Flores is the front-runner for the November 30 elections.

A Russian-made Mi-8 has crashed into the Caspian Sea, taking with it the lives of some 21 oil workers and helo crew. The Mi-8 went down near the Gyuneshli offshore oil field, near Kazakhstan. Only one passenger survived. He was hospitalized nearby and reported in critical condition. No cause of the accident has been determined.

Six months after the fatal crash of a Colgate-Palmolive American Eurocopter BK 117 into the waters of the East River off Manhattan claimed the life of a senior executive, that operator is routinely operating its other BK 117 in a plant-to-plant shuttle throughout the New York and New Jersey area. The Colgate operation had been awarded a mileage safety citation by American Eurocopter just a few months before the crash last March, noting its many miles and many hours of accident-free time. At present, the company has no plans to replace the lost helicopter.

1414 477

news

Relief in Sight?

Movement on the 'Copter Front: Sightseeing Company Volunteers to Change its Routes; Federal Legislation Introduced to Empower FAA to Set Guidelines
by Peter Duffy

Two separate actions may lessen the problem of helicopter noise in the city.

Liberty Helicopters, a sightseeing company, has voluntarily decided to re-route its flights — the company will now only fly over the Hudson River. The company had previously flown up the East River, crossed Manhattan north of 86th Street (or at Yankee Stadium), and then down the Hudson River to the West 30th Street heliport, where the company is based.

"The cross routes over the city have been discontinued on a permanent basis," said Pat Mallen, assistant to the president of Liberty Helicopters.

The only time the company will fly the old routes, Mallen said, will be to honor commitments to customers who bought tickets to see East Side sights.

The announcement is sure to please residents who have long complained about the noise of helicopter overflights. But not everyone is pleased.

Though the route change alleviates problems in Brooklyn Heights and on the East Side, it worsens them on the West Side,

said Joy Held, executive director of the Helicopter Noise Coalition, the chief anti-helicopter group in the city.

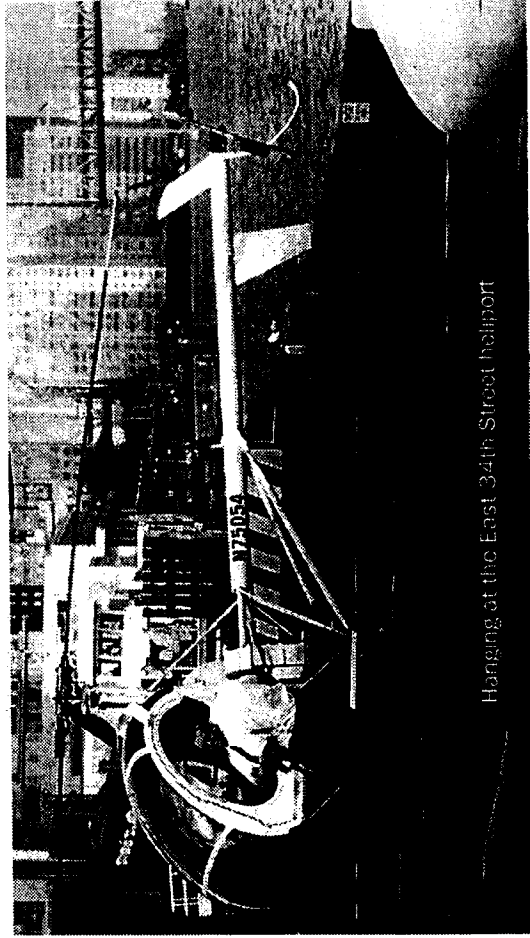
"The Helicopter Noise Coalition has consistently been opposed to transferring the problem from neighborhood to neighborhood," she said.

Coleen Caron, who lives on West 22nd Street between Eighth and Ninth avenues, argues that Liberty doesn't fly over the Hudson anyway — instead, its flights hug the shoreline. And residents get a fuller earful of helicopter noise.

"[Helicopter noise] is definitely increasing," she said.

Liberty Helicopters is one of two sightseeing companies in the city. National Helicopters suffered a setback when it was evicted in April from the East 34th Street heliport. Many helicopter opponents think that Liberty is trying to lessen community concerns so that it avoids the fate of National — even Mayor Rudolph Giuliani condemned National Helicopter.

In other helicopter news, Rep. Carolyn



Hanging at the East 34th Street heliport

Maloney is expected to introduce legislation in the House of Representatives later in the week to empower the Federal Aviation Administration to regulate helicopter noise and traffic in cities with populations of more than one million people.

As improbable as it sounds, the FAA has little regulatory control over chopper flights. It simply requires that flights in Class B airspace — most of Manhattan — conform to minimum pilot licensing rules, operating requirements and equipment standards. Any helicopter that wants to enter Class B airspace must ask permission of air traffic control at LaGuardia or JFK airports. Flights over the East and Hudson rivers do not require radio contact.

Once in Class B airspace, air traffic control will attempt to keep helicopters to one

of 30 established routes. That's basically it. Maloney's legislation, co-sponsored by West Side Rep. Jerrold Nadler and Brooklyn Rep. Edolphus Towns, would allow the FAA to establish a chopper curfew, restrict the number of flights, set guidelines on the types of choppers that can be used, and other initiatives.

Maloney says there has been a 23 percent increase in helicopter takeoffs and landings in the city since 1991. She is concerned about issues of noise and safety.

The Helicopter Noise Coalition is all for Maloney's legislation.

"We applaud Carolyn Maloney for taking the lead in her efforts to obtain badly needed regulation for this industry," said Held. "We are steadfast in our resolve that what is required is a flight-free zone for New York City."

Congress urged to regulate city's copter noise, safety

TOWN & VILLAGE ■ THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1997 ■ 5

By Geoffrey Williams

Politicians and activists gathered at the West 30th Street heliport on Monday to promote a bill recently introduced in Congress that would empower the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to regulate helicopter noise and safety in New York and other cities with populations of more than 500,000.

If enacted, the Helicopter Noise Control and Safety Act would give the FAA authority to determine if the aircraft pose a threat to the city's public health and welfare, and to develop a plan to reduce that risk.

Put forth by New York Congresspersons Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler and Edolphus Towns, the bill would severely curtail helicopter overflights that some activists, residents and politicians say have "long plagued" New York City.

State and city officials are now "powerless to control the noise" emitted by the thousands of helicopters that take off, land and fly over the city each day, maintain the U.S. Representatives.

Only the federal government, not local or state agencies, can regulate air space, Federal District Judge Sonya Sotomayor ruled in a January court decision that angered city officials and anti-noise activists.

"The FAA [should] have the authority to cut down on the unsafe and noisy helicopters that are chipping away at our city's quality of life," said Maloney. "We've already had several deaths in the city because of helicopter accidents. That is several too many."

Prior to Monday's press conference, the three delegates solicited support for the bill from colleagues, calling helicopters "loud and

dangerous."

"Help put a stop to the problem of helicopter noise and potential threats to safety before it gets out of hand," wrote Maloney, Nadler and Towns in the October 31 letter to their Congressional colleagues.

The Helicopter Noise Control and Safety Act would allow the FAA to restrict the day, time and frequency of city takeoffs, landings and overflights, the types of helicopters used, and the operations of particular heliports.

Under the law, city, state and local agencies or heliport owners could submit regulatory plans to the FAA, which would have the authority to modify or implement them. Should the bill become law, administrative, emergency, media and military helicopter operations would be exempt from any restrictions.

"I am confident that this bill will gather the support it needs in Congress to pass and make our city, and other American cities, safe from the noise and danger of unregulated helicopters," said Maloney.

There have been five helicopter crashes, resulting in five deaths, in New York City since 1983.

"New York residents report helicopters blasting overhead every two minutes during peak hours and during days and weeks when travel is heavy," stated Maloney, Nadler and Towns in their plea for support. "There has been a 23-percent increase in helicopter takeoffs and landings in New York City since 1991."

That increase, say anti-noise activists, has exacerbated a problem that the city has long ignored.

"The 34th Street heliport is [in violation] of the city's noise code every hour of

every day it is in operation," said Joy Held, president of Helicopter Noise Coalition (HNC), a group of 15,000 activists that sued the city in June in an effort to close the East Side heliport, and eventually eliminate all non-emergency overflights in the city. "Those standards go back 18 years."

HNC commissioned a private Environmental Impact Study (EIS) on the 34th Street heliport in September and October, learning that noise caused by helicopters there was 12 times what city codes allow. Held maintains the findings of her group's EIS mirror those of a similar one done by the city in 1995.

"The city has noise codes it refuses to enforce," said Held, who likened the city's relationship with what she calls a "renegade, rogue helicopter industry" as the "fox guarding the henhouse."

State Supreme Court Judge George Daniels has said he will decide shortly whether he plans to render a decision on the pending class-action lawsuit (filed by HNC, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and Assemblyman Steve Sanders, among others) based on evidence already submitted by both sides, set a hearing date to review what's already been submitted, or set an open hearing so he can call witnesses and hear testimony.

"The aim of this bill is to

ensure that city residents recapture some measure of the peace and tranquility that has been taken away from them by constant helicopter activity," said Nadler.

In April, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's tentatively announced his bid for a city-wide master plan on helicopters, when he resolved to close the 60th Street heliport (following a fatal crash there), move its operator, Johnson Controls (now American Port Services) to 34th Street (evicting its longtime operator, National Helicopter), and later open another "mega-heliport" at Pier 76 on the West Side.

Since then, National has been evicted, American has replaced them, but 60th Street has yet to close. Officials say the facility will remain open until the end of the year.

National, which moved to the downtown heliport in August, was barred from the facility the following month for failure to provide evidence of insurance.

Despite Giuliani's pledge to cut helicopter traffic by up to 40 percent, the city has gone ahead with its \$488,000 helicopter master plan, currently being conducted by consultants Edwards and Kelcey Engineers.

The plan, which encom-

passes all facets of the city's long-term helicopter policy (including heliport locations, operations and air traffic), is funded by federal, state and city money, and should be completed by early next year.



Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney wants the FAA to begin regulating helicopter traffic over big cities.

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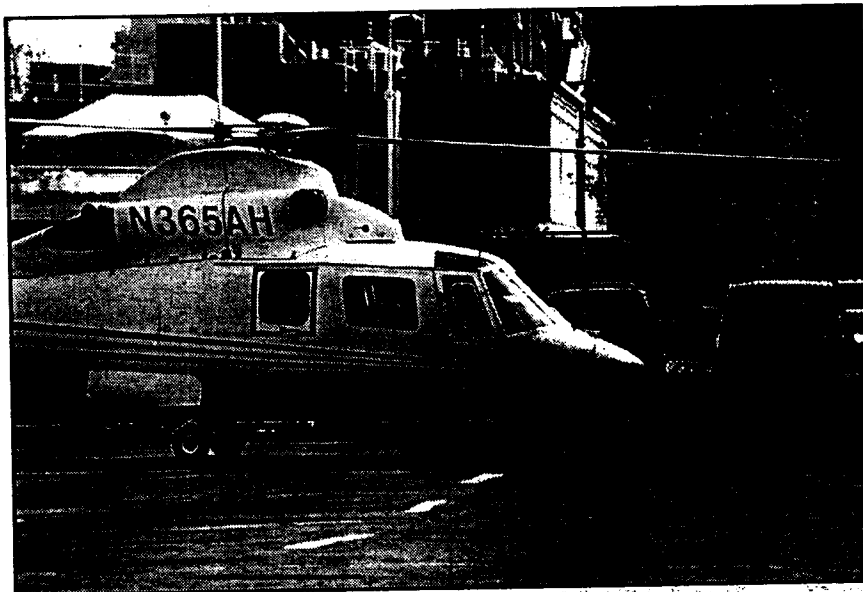
Chopping at the City's Residents

To the editor:

In response to your article "Enemy Territory," Nov. 20:

Community opposition to helicopter

Residents and hospital patients near the East 34th Street Heliport should prepare for a renewed onslaught of helicopter noise, fumes and threats to safety when he-



Ready for takeoff!

overflights comes not only from Manhattan — this a multi-borough fight.

Liberty Helicopter's new routes limited to the Hudson River are hardly "successful" for West Side residents living near the Hudson or for folks visiting waterfront parks there. Nor were West Siders consulted about the change, brokered through Brooklyn Rep. Ed Towns' office and the Eastern Region Helicopter Council (ERHC). The way the ERHC "works with the community" is by pitting one neighborhood or borough against another, to benefit the industry.

The Helicopter Noise Coalition's recent helicopter noise readings of 94 decibels at Rivergate are mirrored by the city's own recent findings of over 90 decibels at a Roosevelt Island residence and the city's 1995 Environmental Impact Statement which recorded equivalent readings for locations near the East 34th Street Heliport (sustained noise over 85 decibels causes permanent hearing loss!).

licopter traffic is rerouted there following the city's closing of the East 60th Street Heliport by year's end.

While I was ultimately reinited and did attend the Helicopter Master Plan Technical Advisory Committee meeting on Nov. 20 at EDC, the public and the press were barred from this meeting, in violation of the New York State Open Meetings Law. This law mandates that meetings held by government or quasi-governmental bodies, which are funded by public dollars to discuss issues of public policy, must be open to the public.

Joy Held
President, Helicopter Noise Coalition

Editor's note: The Economic Development Corp. is holding a second public meeting to discuss the goals and objectives of the city's heliport and helicopter master plan on Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at the second floor courtroom of Brooklyn Borough Hall, 209 Joralemon St.

HNC 480

GREG SARGENT

All Noise, All the Time: Sirens, Choppers ... *Cloth Banners?*

HELICOPTER HULLABALOO

Representative Jerrold Nadler made some noise, too, recently. At Community

Board 1's meeting on Jan. 20, he spoke (but not too loudly) about a bill he is sponsoring to combat the tourist choppers that have contributed to Manhattan's decibel count. Called the Helicopter Noise Control and Safety Act, the legislation would give the Federal Aviation Administration the authority to regulate tourist and business helicopters—an authority it does not now have.

The choppers swoop back and forth along the Hudson and East rivers, and across Manhattan at 86th Street.

Mr. Nadler, whose district includes the West Side, told *The Observer* that tourist flights are the target of the bill, which is co-sponsored by his colleagues Carolyn Maloney of the Upper East Side and Edolphus Towns of Brooklyn. He said that a 2-year-old solution brokered by former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, which produced the current 86th Street route, was inadequate. Mr. Nadler said that if the F.A.A. had the power to regulate chopper flights, the public would have an avenue to pursue relief not available to them before. Board 1, Manhattan's southernmost board, took no formal action on the issue.

"Simply moving helicopters from one part of the city to another does not solve the problem," Mr. Nadler told *The Observer*. "It simply moves the complaints from one community board to another."

The board's district manager, Paul Goldstein, took a slightly less global view. "The biggest concern is that they not dump all the helicopters down in this area," he told *The Observer*.

EVELYN ALDEN

HVC
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A year after the helicopter disaster

She'ar Yashuv looks back in anguish

By DAVID RUDGE

A year afterwards, residents of Moshav She'ar Yashuv still live with the horror of the night when disaster literally fell onto their community out of the sky.

The very name of the moshav has, unfortunately, become synonymous with the helicopters disaster – the worst of its kind in the history of the IDF – which claimed the lives of 73 soldiers.

The physical scars have long since been erased, but bitter memories remain of the night when two Yasur transport helicopters, packed with troops, collided above the community and crashed to Earth.

One of the helicopters fell in fields on the outskirts of She'ar Yashuv, the other ploughed into an empty guest house sandwiched between two homes. Both helicopters burst into flames on impact.

There were no casualties among the residents, but they still bear psychological scars from the trauma of that awful night.

Shimon Soffer, the community's security officer, had just finished his guard duty report and returned to his home on the moshav when he heard an explosion.

"With the benefit of hindsight, I know now that it was the first helicopter crashing. I also heard a noise like an engine whining and then about 90 seconds later there was a second, terrific explosion that rocked the ground," recounted the 49-year-old father of four.

His first thought was that

Katyusha rockets had hit the small close-knit community, just off the main road leading from Kiryat Shmona towards the Banyas and then upwards to Mt. Hermon. The reality was much worse than his most dreaded fears.

The fierce flames and exploding ammunition prevented residents from even approaching the helicopter. Only afterwards, when the fires had been extinguished, was the magnitude of the disaster unveiled under the floodlights of IDF and emergency rescue crews.

Soffer helped recover the bodies from the burned out wreckage. Afterwards he felt the need to put his emotions into words in the form of a poem which honors the memory of the 73 young men whose lives were suddenly, tragically cut short.

Reciting his ballad, which tells of the soldiers joking and recounting stories to one another after a period of home leave and then the collision and the crash, his voice cracks and his eyes mist over.

Soffer shakes his head sadly.

As he spoke, two IAF helicopters passed overhead, almost like an omen. "Every time we hear helicopters we – all of us, and I think I'm speaking for all the residents of She'ar Yashuv – look upwards, and remember," Soffer said.

His friend, Eli Livneh, was at his home at the other end of the moshav on the fateful night.

"I have been in wars, I have seen friends killed alongside me and I have been wounded myself, but I have never seen and never want to

see again what I saw then, a year ago," said Livneh, a retired senior IDF officer.

Livneh was outside talking to a friend. He actually witnessed the collision of the two helicopters and saw the first one crash into the fields, just 300 meters from his house.

"I am not a religious person, but I believe that what happened is what we would call fate," said Livneh, who found it difficult to recount the scenes of the rescue in which he and other residents assisted.

"Our children go there, spontaneously, to the spot and light candles and we have continued to do that throughout the year. Some people have tried to shut it out, but for those of us who were close to the disaster the memories remain," he said.

What he cannot accept, when it comes to the question of why it happened, is the attempt by some to blame the disaster on the ongoing war in south Lebanon.

"This could have happened any-

where, as it did, unfortunately, the past [when 54 soldiers were killed in the Jordan Valley 1977.] To use this disaster as a slogan and say it's a good reason to pull out of Lebanon, is not the right thing to do and in my opinion it harms the parents. It might well be that we should pull out of Lebanon, but the debate should not be linked to the disaster," he said.

The guest house into which the second helicopter crashed has been demolished and grass now covers the site. There is an ancient oak tree nearby, however, which survived intact. It is to the tree that the parents of the soldiers and airmen as well as comrades and visitors come on a regular basis to light memorial candles at its base.

"The tree is 700 to 800 years old and would be able to tell us a lot of history if it could talk," Soffer said.

"Maybe, it is also a symbol to us – that we should be like the tree with strong roots and good health. It is a symbol that life goes on," Soffer added.

HNC 482

5 Aboard Die As Helicopter Hits Power Line And Crashes

A16

MONROE, N.C., May 25 (AP) — A helicopter that was flying too low hit a power line early today and crashed onto a four-lane highway, missing cars but killing all five people aboard.

The helicopter should have been flying at about 500 feet, more than three times the height of the wire, said Butch Wilson, lead investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board.

"He could have been trying to make an emergency landing," Mr. Wilson said.

The helicopter missed traffic on U.S. 74, which is used by vacationers traveling between Charlotte and beaches in North Carolina and South Carolina.

Sheriff Frank McGuirt said no cars were involved.

"Cars were driving by while it was coming down on the highway," Sheriff McGuirt said.

The pilot, John Thomas Elliott, 49, was taking passengers to the Monroe Airport after Sunday's Coca-Cola 600 Winston Cup race at the Charlotte Motor Speedway, about 30 miles away.

The stock car race ended about two hours before the crash.

The airport is a few miles from where the helicopter went down.

In addition to Mr. Elliott, those killed were passengers Craig Goodman Rudolph, 33; Alexandra Johanna Schiffers, 30; Kevin Dadey, 25, and his wife, Pamela, 26. Ms. Schiffers was from Marshall; the others were from Charlotte.

To avoid getting stuck in traffic, some racing fans use the helicopters that offer shuttle service to and from the track on race days.

The crash closed the highway in both directions for several hours. One of the westbound lanes was open by dawn.

Weather was not a factor, Mr. Wilson said. Fog, which eventually became quite thick, was just starting to form around the time of the crash.

The helicopter is owned by U.S. Helicopters Inc., a rental company in Marshville, N.C., which said the crash was its first in its 19-year history.

HWC
483

WORLD

Copter crash

MONROE, North Carolina: Five people died yesterday when a civilian helicopter crashed into a highway 50km east of Charlotte. The helicopter was so badly damaged that investigators were having trouble determining its identification number and the origin of the flight.

HNC 484

Choppers Face Chelsea Foes

Chelsea resident Colleen Caron remembers a time when she rocked her children to sleep in a hammock in their private garden behind her apartment. "But because of all the helicopters," she said, "those days are long gone."

Concern among West Side residents about increased helicopter traffic in and around Manhattan has grown tremendously in recent years. Caron is one of hundreds of members of the Hudson River Branch of the Helicopter Noise Coalition (HNC), an organization desirous of eliminating all but emergency helicopter traffic from the city skies.

Members of the HNC, as well as other West Side residents, fear that the proposed Hudson River Park will lead to another heliport in Manhattan, worsening a noise and safety problem they claim is already out of control.

The preliminary version of the Hudson River Park Act, co-sponsored by New York State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried and New York State Sen. Franz Leichter, allowed for a new heliport to be built in the park on Pier 72 or 76, located off West 32nd and 36th streets, respectively. But after mounting opposition, largely by West Side community boards and local organizations, language in the bill allowing for a new heliport was dropped.

Community Board 2, for example, passed a resolution in support of the Hudson River Park Act several weeks ago, but only after sponsors of the bill complied with its objections that a heliport did not belong within the confines of a recreational park.

Still, many residents are concerned that the bill may change again, allowing for heliports. "The bill may be in our favor right now," Joy Held, president of the Helicopter Noise Coalition, said, "but until it becomes law, it can be changed and different language can be put back in."

The increase in helicopter traffic over New York has been so dramatic over the last several years that the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is currently drafting the New York City Heliport and Helicopter System Master Plan. Although not yet written, several community groups and politicians are already concerned that the EDC's plan will focus more on how to increase commercial development than create safety regulations.

In a public hearing last week at Community Board 4,

Helicopters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

a host of local representatives submitted prepared statements voicing their concerns with EDC's master plan.

Assemb. Scott Stringer submitted testimony lamenting that no single federal agency had adequate jurisdiction to fully regulate helicopter traffic.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler echoed these sentiments in an issued statement expressing concern that insufficient helicopter flight regulations was the impetus for his

Helicopter Noise Control and Safety Act, a bill he co-sponsored that would give the FAA greater authority to regulate helicopter traffic.

HNC members are scheduled to meet with City Councilmember Stanley Michels next week to discuss other possible actions.

"Right now, we don't have the resources to go after all the heliports at once," said Held. "We have to go one site at a time, which will cause a temporary imbalance. But that doesn't mean we aren't moving in a straightforward line to where we want to be."

— Sam Bruchey

HNC 485

Manhattan spur 4/9/98

EDITORIAL

Create a Livable Park

It is hard to find fault with the idea of a park along the Hudson River. More green space can only benefit the city. But it is equally hard to see the benefit of more helicopter flights over Manhattan, which might be a result of the Hudson River Park Act.

Helicopter flights over the city have proliferated exponentially in the last decade. And with the additional flights has come an increase in noise, pollution and risk of tragedy should a helicopter crash on a crowded city street.

Responding to the increase in helicopter traffic, the Helicopter Noise Coalition (HNC), an organization dedicated to reducing the number of commercial flights above Manhattan, formed one year ago. Since then, that organization has made considerable gains. One East Side heliport has been closed, several lawmakers have introduced legislation designed to control the proliferation of helicopter flights, and public awareness of the dangers of flights over Manhattan is greater now than ever before.

But now there is the possibility that the gains of the HNC will be offset by a new heliport that might be built on the West Side pursuant to the Hudson River Park Act. Indeed, the original version of the Hudson River Park Act called for a new heliport, on either Pier 72 or 76 (on West 32nd and 36th streets, respectively). While the proposal was since modified to disallow heliports, residents are understandably concerned that by the time the bill is enacted, it will include a provision creating a new heliport.

It would be a shame to see HNC's successes of the past year offset by yet another heliport. We urge the state lawmakers not to put one in the new park.

HNC 486

APRIL 16-22, 1998

THE WESTSIDER

LETTERS

A Cry Against 'Copters

To the Editor:

Your article on our community efforts against helicopters ["A Whirling Dervish for Westsiders," April 9-15] may confuse some readers about the Gottfried-

Leichter Hudson River Park Bill.

Our bill would prohibit any heliport on the Hudson River waterfront from Battery Park City to 59th Street. A heliport has no place in a waterfront park.

At first, Community Board 4 had supported moving the present West 30th Street Heliport onto Pier 76 because the community wanted to move it away from the

land, and Pier 76 was expected to be devoted largely to a ferry terminal (not park uses) anyway. An early draft of our bill therefore followed that community position. It never referred to Pier 72.

However, the community, Sen. Leichter and I have since changed our view for two key reasons:

First, Pier 76 is not going to be a ferry terminal and should instead be devoted primarily or entirely to park uses. Opening a heliport on that pier is therefore out of the question.

Second, it is becoming increasingly clear that any heliport on the Hudson River waterfront would likely become the major, or only, facility in Manhattan. So the only sensible approach is to rule out any heliport in the park area.

That is exactly what our bill does.

When your article says that the Hudson River Bill responds to the "mounting opposition" to a heliport at Pier 76, you should have told your readers that Leichter and I were active participants in that opposition and revised our bill accordingly.

As for Community Board 2, the bill draft prohibition of a heliport was added well before they took a position on the bill.

No legislator is more adamant or persistent than I am in opposi-

tion to helicopters and heliports. I am a prime sponsor of Assemblymember Debra Glick's bill to restrict heliports in New York City. I am a party to the Helicopter Noise Coalition's anti-heliport lawsuit. I have vocally opposed the lack of opportunity for community input into the city's Helicopter/Heliport Master Plan (in testimony and in let-

ters to the administration), calling on City Council Speaker Peter Vallone to hold an oversight hearing, supporting the federal Helicopter Noise Control and Safety Act and never missing an opportunity for comment at a public hearing.

Richard Gottfried
State Assemblymember

HNC 487

Hearing addresses East Side helicopter noise problem

Opening statements at the well attended hearing by Noach Dear and Stanley Michaels, committee chairs, roundly denounced the FAA as callous, heartless, and cowardly for not attending the hearing.

Queens Borough President Claire Shulman remarked that while police and medical copters are necessary, all others are discretionary. She noted that, while the airplane industry may be necessary to

area economy, the much smaller helicopter industry may not be.

It was clear from early testimony that unrest is mounting over the issue of continually increasing aviation industry growth in the region, its deleterious effects on residents' lives and the lack of community-based controls.

Helicopter noise and danger are adding fuel to the debate. The New York City Department of Environmen-

tal Protection representative noted that local regulation of aircraft noise levels is pre-empted by the federal government.

A host of community representatives and members voiced concerns about copter noise and safety issues. The base of concern is expanding, turning this into a regional issue needing regional response and solutions.

Many representatives, including Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Assem-

blyman Richard Gottfried, and Council member Scott Stringer voiced opposition to new heliports in New York City.

The Natural Resources and Defense Council representative said they are doing a study on the environment impact of helicopters and stated that there should be no heliport within the planned Hudson River Waterfront Park.

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) will shortly release its Helicopter Master Plan, an industry demand forecast, with a prediction of no increase in corporate use. When asked by Councilman Andrew Eristoff how the EDC could justify building a new port on Pier 76, EDC representative Steven Jacobs replied that traffic will be shifted there from other ports.

Eristoff and others expressed concern about the East 34th Street port which is located on the FDR and adjacent to apartment buildings and the NYU Medical Center. The Medical Center has complained for years about helicopter fumes,

noise and danger. City Council was urged to review its special permit in light of the recent federal court decision upholding only four of the required provisions.

The consensus was that helicopters have become a tremendous problem, not

only in New York City, but in the region. The City Council will explore what it can do to ameliorate problems.

For more information, call Joy Held of the Helicopter Noise Coalition of NYC at 628-3126.

HVC 488

City's heliport master plan falls

Copter plan blasted by area leaders

By Charles Sweeney

The New York City Helicopter Master Plan was unveiled at a meeting at One Police Plaza last Thursday, and local politicians and other community leaders are far from satisfied.

Commissioned by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the plan fell short of the expectations of community officials and citizens concerned about the noise and danger caused by under-regulated helicopter flights, if the public gathering was

Continued from page 1
any indication.

State Assemblyman Steve Sanders blasted the plan, calling it "a waste of money, providing useless solutions." Sanders also called for the closing of the East 34th Street heliport, calling it a "major public nuisance to my constituents that should never have been located in such a densely populated area."

The report did not take into consideration "safer, cheaper methods of transportation," according to Sanders. In his remarks at the meeting, the Assemblyman suggested that the city consider ferries as an alternative to the noise and danger of helicopter traffic.

The city's report recommends discontinuing sightseeing tours from city-owned heliports. Currently, there are no sightseeing flights from the East 34th Street heliport, but flights do take place from the state-owned heliports at West 30th Street and downtown.

The report also favors the development of a new heliport at either Pier 72 or Pier 76 on the West Side, despite strong objection from City

Councilman Tom Duane. The report also maintains that corporate helicopter activity should remain level or decrease over the next 10 years, an item strongly objected to by The Helicopter Noise Coalition of New York (HNCNY).

On the whole, the city's master plan recommends maintaining the status quo for the next decade. Among

the few changes would be erecting a noise barrier on the western perimeter of the East 34th Street heliport, to "mitigate potential ground-level noise effects." It also calls for the establishment of a complaint hotline, to be established and maintained by the EDC.

Ninety percent of the funding for the plan, which was the result of a study conducted by the aeronautical consulting firm Edwards and Keeley, came from federal funds, five percent from city funds and five percent from state funds.

Calls to the EDC to determine the cost of the plan were not returned, but local officials estimate the tab at approximately \$300,000.

While addressing the meeting on the plan, Councilman Duane described it as "unacceptable." Duane's Council district includes the heliport on West 30th Street, where the city is the landlord.

In February, the city won a court battle giving it the right to regulate traffic from heliports where it is the landlord. However, activists and community leaders have complained that the city's regulations were not restrictive enough and did not take into account the views and opinions of residents and community leaders.

Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields was one of the plan's harsher critics, calling for a complete moratorium on sightseeing flights around Manhattan.

"Without air tours," Fields said, "the plan projects that future helicopter operations

short, leaders insist

would be reduced by 70 percent."

Fields called for a drastic reduction of flights from the East 34th Street Heliport, limiting the site for emergency use only. "This would bring the total helicopter operations in the city to well within the capacity for the downtown heliport," Fields said.

Blasting the plan and the city's efforts at regulation, Duane called the proposed

solution "window dressing on a plan that cut the community and elected officials out of the process, which will not solve any of our problems."

City Councilman Andrew Eristoff, who is also in favor of shutting down the East 34th Street heliport, stopped short of criticizing the report.

"I think it's a useful catalogue of what is now going on in the regulatory system, the traffic routes," Eristoff said. "But I don't think it struck any bold new notes."

The meeting at One Police Plaza was an attempt by the city to solicit and include the reaction and feedback of the community. The responses will be compiled in an addendum to the report, before the Mayor receives the plan and decides which parts of it he wishes to implement.

Perhaps the most strident critic of the plan is HNCNY. Joy Held, the group's president, characterized the plan as "putting special interests above the public's need for protection against helicopter noise."

Founded by Held in response to noise from helicopters flying along sightseeing routes over the East River near her apartment, the HNCNY maintains that all sightseeing flights should be prohibited, corporate traffic should be severely limited and only one heliport should remain open out of three currently in use in Manhattan.

The group also wants helicopters to have clearly marked undersides for easier identification in the event of noise violations or route deviations.

Eristoff, while familiar with the East Side group's written response to the plan, does not share its hard-line position.

"I'm not one of those who say, No helicopters over New York City whatsoever," he said. "I've read HNCNY's response and my own view is more of a parochial East Sider. My main concern is the East 34th Street heliport."

HNC 489

Taking a Chop at Over Flights

BY DEBRA DEACON

West Side residents may not see an end to aircraft noise any time soon.

The recent increase in air traffic and noise due, in part, to summer construction at La Guardia Airport has not let up since the scheduled end of the construction season in mid-October and is keeping some local residents up at night, counting over flights.

Thirty-one-year Central Park West resident Diana Schneider recently counted 11 jets passing over her apartment near 70th Street during a 25-minute period. She said she is often awakened at night and worries about suffering from a sleep deprivation disorder.

"Even if you don't wake up, your body still is affected by the noise," she said. "The noise puts your body into a 'flight-or-flight' mode and can cause high blood pressure, increased-risk of strokes and a host of other illnesses."

Schneider said the overabundant over flights got worse in the spring of 1996, when the planes started using a different flight pattern. After much research, she discovered that the planes used to line up one after the other to land at La Guardia. "Now they fan out and get funneled in."

During the most recent airport construction season, from May 30 to Oct. 12, airplanes were diverted while one of the runways was resurfaced, its pillings strengthened and arrestor beds installed, said Jim Morrissey of the Port Authority. La Guardia has only two runways and sits partially over Flushing Bay.

The arrestor beds are the second in the country and are designed to keep jets from going off the end of the runway, Morrissey said.

The runway construction has forced the airport to re-route some of its planes flying over Manhattan.

Congested skies are not the only complaint from the public. Helicopters and pollution are

also a concern.

"Helicopters are an unregulated hole in the flight industry," said Colleen Karen of the Helicopter Noise Coalition. "They fly without a minimum altitude, and if they don't land, they don't have to contact La Guardia tower."

The New York City airspace is due for an overhaul according to the Federal Aviation Administration. The plan includes La Guardia, Kennedy and Newark international airports and hopefully will reduce the noise and cut down on delays. Last year Newark and La Guardia rated the worst in air delays in the country.

"Excess fuel is often dumped as a jet nears its destination. Supposedly it evaporates and it is highly toxic," said Alan Greene of Sane Aviation for Everyone. ■

1-INC 490

West Side Express

By Marc Borbély

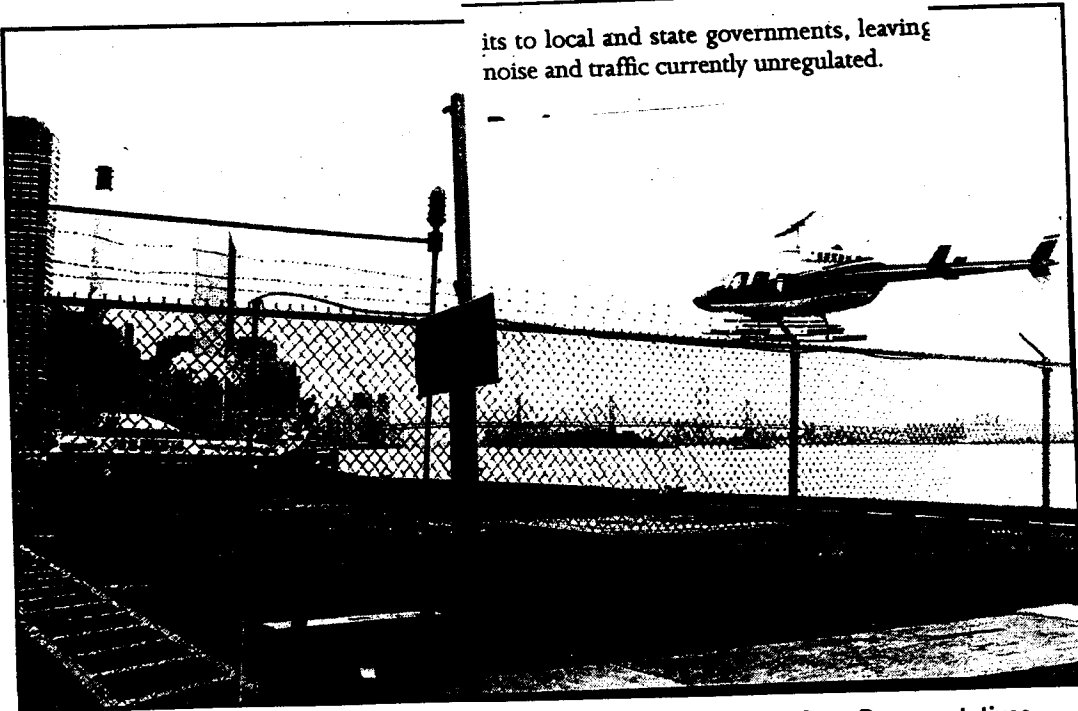
Clipping Helicopters

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT — Last week, Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Jerrold Nadler introduced a bill that would give the Federal Aviation Administration the authority to regulate New York City helicopters.

The number of helicopter take-offs and landings in New York City has increased by 23 percent since 1991, they report, and during peak hours, they say, helicopters can be heard every two minutes, disrupting neighbors' lives.

The courts, say Maloney and Nadler, have decreed helicopter-regulation to be off-lim-

its to local and state governments, leaving noise and traffic currently unregulated.



West Siders trying to ban helicopters got some support in Washington from Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Jerrold Nadler.

HWC 4/11

April 1999 ★

Star Reporter Newspapers • Staten Island, N.Y.

Residents Appeal to FAA to End Nuisance Helicopter Flights

Noise pollution -- plus complaints about clamor and reverberations -- were on the agenda as Island leaders teamed up with residents to urge air traffic officials to put an end to low-flying helicopters.

In return, top brass from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council (ERHC) pledged to assess changes in the FAA's favored helicopter route.

The forum, held at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island in New Brighton, was hosted by

Assemblymember Elizabeth Connelly and Rep. Vito Fossella, in conjunction with the New Brighton Citizens Committee, the Forest Regional Residents Civic Association and the Randall Manor Residents Association.

The current air route travels across the Island from the Fresh Kills landfill to St. George, disturbing residents in the northwest section.

The new route, proposed by ERHC for travel between New York and New Jersey, would take pilots only over waterways.



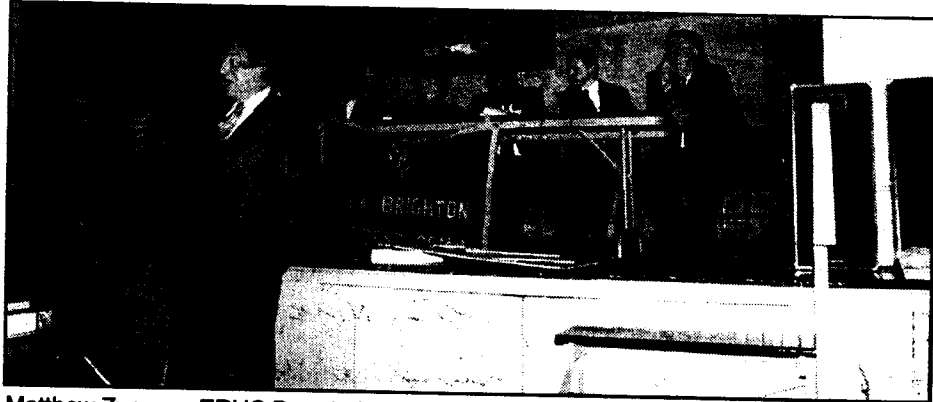
Islanders gather for the lowdown on noise pollution and disturbance caused by low-flying helicopters.

Photos by Jim Romano



Comprising the panel are (from left): Matthew Zuccaro, ERHC Board of Directors adviser; Arlene Feldman, FAA regional administrator; Michael McMahon, aide to Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly; Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly; and Thomas Quaadman, chief-of-staff, Congressman Vito Fossella.

HWC 492



Matthew Zuccaro, ERHC Board of Directors adviser, speaks to the crowd. Pictured on the dais are (from left) Assembly aide Michael McMahon, Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly, congressional chief-of-staff Thomas Quadman, Councilman Stephen Fiala and Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano.



The crowd listens intently.

HWC 493

Long Island Section Apr. 11, 1999 NY Times

Helicopters: More Towns Are Starting To Say No

By DAVID WINZELBERG

A FANTASY for those stuck in traffic and a convenience for corporate executives, the helicopter is the ultimate freedom machine. Unencumbered by flight plans or runways, these air taxis can take off at a moment's notice and land a few steps from a passenger's final destination.

But in recent years that freedom has been reduced on Long Island as more and more towns have passed regulations restricting where they can take off and land. And in some areas where helicopters can still operate on private property, neighbors are becoming more vocal about the noise.

There have been three or four helicopters at Bistran Gravel in East Hampton, flying back and forth to construction projects on Long Island and in Connecticut, but now there are none. "We used to be able to land anywhere," said Barry Bistran, the company's president. "But the town made restrictions on that."

Ken Kurrass, an officer of Norman Kurrass Construction, used a helicopter to get to job sites from his East Patchogue office in the 1970's and 1980's. "We would land in empty lots or an empty field," he said. "But now there are more restrictions on where you can land. If I have to land at an airport and then have to drive or provide transportation, then it's not worth it."

There was more helicopter activity on private property five or six years ago, according to Mike Brazill, the chief operating officer for Summit Aviation in Farmingdale, one of the Island's largest air charter companies.

"We would land around the Oyster Bay area, on the horse farms in Old Westbury and on private estates in the Hamptons," he said. "But there is less of that now,



Maxine Hicks for The New York Times

Helicopters have flown from Thomson Industries' headquarters in Port Washington since 1962, but that use may be in jeopardy.

because local homeowners complained."

Federal regulations allow helicopters to land whenever permission is granted by the property owner, including a parking lot or front yards, requiring a landing area of only 40 feet square or less. But most Long Island towns have prohibited helicopters on private property except in emergencies, such as police or hospital use. In some cases, special use permits can be issued.

In December, Cablevision applied to the Town of Oyster Bay to operate a helicopter from its newly acquired property in Bethpage, which it purchased from Northrop Grumman. While the application is under review, the company continues to fly in and out of the property, to the chagrin of some nearby homeowners.

"We don't want these things flying over our houses," said Julio Gonzalez, who lives across the street from the Cablevision site. Mr. Gonzalez, a retired pipe fitter who has lived in his ranch-style home on Stewart Avenue for 37 years, helped collect more than 600 signatures on a petition opposing the use of the Cablevision helicopter in his neighborhood.

Grumman had once tested a variety of aircraft at its Bethpage site, including the F-14 fighter and the AWACS radar plane. However, 105 acres of the 645-acre property is owned by the Navy, which exempted the

HWC 494

More Towns Are Saying No to Helicopters

Continued From Page 1

flights from local government control.

"The AWACS did come in here," said Mr. Gonzalez, "but Grumman was responsive to our concerns. They were a good neighbor. Cablevision is just using it for the pleasure of running around here. They're very arrogant about it."

Cablevision flies a 1986 twin-engine Sikorsky 76 at the site and said its use is "appropriate and consistent with the rich aviation history at the Grumman site." They added: "We are happy to communicate with any interested parties in a constructive fashion."

Town Supervisor John Venditto urged Cablevision to stop its Bethpage helicopter operations pending the hearing on its special-use permit.

"It's critical that we maintain the delicate balance between business and the people who live here," he said. "But with the density of population that we have in the Town of Oyster Bay, helicopter travel is something I would look at with a jaundiced eye."

Ever since Thomson Industries established its headquarters in a Port Washington sand pit in 1962, the company used helicopters on the site, mostly to shuttle back and forth to its plant in Lancaster, Pa. Now a nine-passenger Sikorsky and a four-passenger A-Star make the trips for the company, which has since added three plants in Connecticut.

An ordinance passed by the Village of Port Washington North in the early 1970's allows Thomson to use of helicopters on its property, but the current village attorney, Stephen Limmer, said that the special use

would not be given again.

"That use was grandfathered," Mr. Limmer said. "Today we wouldn't permit any helicopters." Even though Thomson's seven-acre property is in a commercial zone, there are several homes nearby, and according to Mr. Limmer, there have been complaints about noise.

Gould Ryder, general manager of Thomson's aviation division, has dealt with most of those complaints. Because of community concerns, the company has a self-imposed curfew on its helicopters. It will only fly from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. on weekdays, with no flights on the weekends.

"We go out over abandoned property, then over Mill Pond and Manhasset Bay," Mr. Ryder said. "We might be going over three or four houses." A helicopter pilot for 25 years, Mr. Ryder said advancements in rotor systems have made aircraft quieter.

Matt Zuccaro, an aviation consultant and special adviser to the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council, a trade group, said many helicopters are quieter than some trucks and motorcycles. "We are very conscious of the problem and we are trying to mitigate the impact in terms of noise," he said. "We certainly fly in a congested area, and pilots try to fly at the highest altitude that's operationally feasible."

Unlike most fixed-wing aircraft, flight plans are not required for helicopters, according to Jim Peters, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration. Once in the air, a helicopter pilot is required to notify the nearest air traffic control center. There are helicopter routes that pilots follow within the airspace between mid-Nassau County and eastern New Jersey, but while flying

under 1,000 feet around most of Long Island, helicopter traffic goes largely unchecked.

A helicopter master plan study conducted by the City of New York, citing National Transportation Safety Board statistics, said the safety record of metropolitan area helicopters was nine times better than the national average. "Helicopter travel is very safe," Mr. Zuccaro said. "You have a higher chance of death in an automobile."

Town officials and helicopter pi-

Complaints about the noise flourish, and now so do restrictions.

lots said that Charles Wang, the chairman and chief executive of Computer Associates, commutes in a twin-engine Sikorsky from his home in Cove Neck to his company's baseball field helipad in Islandia. Computer Associates officials said they would not comment on the helicopter.

Late last year, Computer Associates applied for a second helipad on its 75-acre property, according to Mr. Peters of the F.A.A. "Originally, they were going to put it on the roof, but there's too much machinery up there," said an Islandia village official. Located about two and a half miles from MacArthur Airport, Islandia has nothing in its zoning code that prohibits helicopters on private property. Although there is a condo-

minium complex nearby, a village official said there have been no complaints about the helicopter.

The Hamptons are a popular destination for air travelers, especially during the summer, when passengers at Manhattan heliports board an endless stream of helicopters bound for the East End. Because of local restrictions barring landings on private property, they touch down at airports in Westhampton, East Hampton and Montauk and at a helipad in Southampton.

The Village of Southampton built the helipad on Meadow Lane to serve the residences of the exclusive ocean-front homes across the street, according to the Village Administrator, Jim Van Nostrand. Consisting of a 40-foot-square landing area and a wind sock, the Southampton pad is open for day landings only. The village has "not received very many complaints" about the helicopters, he said.

There are also charter services on the Island. Summit charges \$1,000 and up to charter a five-passenger A-Star for the 40-minute flight from Manhattan to the East End.

Mr. Brazill said his pilots still had and take off on private property, but mostly in Connecticut and upstate New York, where rules are more relaxed. He said Long Island should establish more public-use heliports, which would make helicopter flight more convenient to those living or working in restricted areas. And for those they serve, time is money.

"You're talking about people who run big corporations and have huge responsibilities," Mr. Brazill said. "Their time is so valuable. Why should they sit in a car for three or four hours?"

Time-share chopper a shore way to Hamptons-

By BRADEN KEIL

Now you can take your time-share helicopter to your time-share house in the Hamptons.

Beginning on Memorial weekend, newcomer Gabriel Aviation is offering a summer-long charter package of helicopter service to and from the Hamptons for about the same price as a rental share in a beachhouse.

The trip will take 35 minutes — as opposed to an average of three hours by car.

The helicopter has been the preferred — if pricey — mode of travel for celebrities and captains of industry heading to the Hamptons' oceanfront mansions.

But now, some regular folks are joining their ranks.

While many helicopter-charter companies already serve the area — 14 at last count — none has ventured into the share market.

"I wanted to spread the cost of helicopter flying to make it affordable to those who may not otherwise consider it a viable option," says Jeff Hyman, 32, president of Gabriel Aviation.

He says his frustration at Hamptons traffic, coupled with a marketing background and passion for whirlybirds, was the catalyst for his idea.

Hyman's company is charging \$5,975 for a 15-weekend package (an average of \$398 round-trip) for a limited membership of less than 50 individuals.

Other helicopter charters range from \$1,600 to \$2,200 each way for a five-seat chopper.

In contrast, the Hamptons Jitney bus costs \$22 each way.

Gabriel has a fleet of air-conditioned, leather-appointed, five-passenger jet-powered helicopters to whisk its clients to the East End.

They will leave from three Manhattan locations and land at the East Hampton Airport and the Southampton helipad.

The company has set up a flexible scheduling system to accommodate members and their changing itineraries.

The copters will depart Thursdays and Fridays and return on Sundays and Mondays.

"So far, the response to the program has been very enthusiastic," said partner Mike Renz, who's also one of the company's pilots.



FLY BOYS: Mike Renz (seated) and Jeff Hyman are betting their helicopter business will take off.

N.Y. Post: Tamara Beckwith

HW 496

Copters to stop buzzing North Shore communities

■ **FAA says route change for Manhattan-to-Jersey flights will begin in 6 months**

By **TERENCE J. KIVLAN**
ADVANCE WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Federal officials have agreed to a flight route change designed to keep southbound helicopters flying out of Manhattan from slanting across the North Shore on their way to New Jersey.

Under the new route, the aircraft would fly entirely over water to New Jersey — via New York Harbor, the Narrows and Raritan Bay — instead of roaring over densely populated residential neighborhoods like St. George, Randall Manor, West Brighton, Port Richmond and Mariners Harbor.

The impending route change was announced this week by Regional Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Arlene Feldman in a letter to Republican Rep. Vito Fossella, who, along with Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly (D-North Shore), pressured the agency to do something to ease the noise plaguing Is-

land areas.

Ms. Feldman explained the adjustment would be implemented in about six months and said in the meanwhile FAA officials are encouraging helicopter pilots to take alternative routes other than the one over Staten Island.

The North Shore route was approved about 10 years ago, apparently without the knowledge of Island elected officials.

Ms. Feldman, however, stressed that even after the new flight pattern takes effect, helicopters can still receive clearance from FAA air controllers to go over the Island because the route, while not considered preferred, is deemed "safe and legal."

Aides to Fossella said he expects helicopter flights to "drop dramatically" with the implementation of the new route because it has the support of the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council, which represents helicopter owners and operators in the harbor area.

In a joint statement, Ms. Connelly and Fossella hailed the FAA route remapping plan as a major breakthrough. "For years we have fought to relieve the constant noise problem caused by helicopters, and we are thrilled that our efforts have brought victory," Mrs. Connelly said.

FROM PAGE A1

She said that although "there may still be some helicopter flights across Staten Island, we are hopeful that the remapping ... and the voluntary efforts of the pilots will provide Staten Island with significant noise abatement."

Said Fossella: "As I have said for some time, it's just common sense that flying helicopters over water will mean less noise for residents on the North Shore."

He added that he hoped that the FAA's "quick response" on the helicopter issue carried over to its performance on other noise problems, namely those caused by airliners leaving Newark Airport.

Officials of the Eastern Council could not be reached for comment last night. But at an April 6 hearing on the Island sponsored by Ms. Connelly and Fossella, Matthew Zucarro, a consultant for the group, said the new route would add only 2.5 minutes to the average trip to New Jersey and that he saw no valid reason why the mostly corporate helicopter operators would not take it.

"We honestly believe we can mitigate this problem to a point where it becomes satisfactory to the community," said Zucarro, commenting on this group's view of the water route.

North Shore residents, including Ms. Connelly, have been especially aggravated by the helicopter traffic because much of it occurs at night. "I have personally been offended," she said in a recent interview. "You find yourself leaping out of bed ... You think the police are landing on your roof."

She charged that the FAA approved the North Shore route to enable helicopter operators to "cut corners" and save on fuel costs.

HWC 497



"From the git-go, I was open to the enlivening possibilities of a savage animal attack."

The Missing Leader, And Other Race Gaffes

In marathon coverage, the only thing worse than missing a runner's dramatic break for the lead late in the race is missing the finish.

For 14 minutes on Sunday, Channel 11 viewers did not know that Franziska Rochat-Moser had overtaken Tegla Loroupe for the women's lead in the New York City Marathon. Loroupe was last seen leading on 138th Street. Then, no word. Elite runners lost in the mists of Manhattan.

During those 14 minutes, the men were winding up; John Kagwe was headed toward a possible course record. So Trans World International, which produced the event for Channel 11, followed Kagwe, then four more runners, to confusion.

Yet no word about the women. No split screens. No picture-in-picture. And nothing verbal from the studio by Al Trautwig or Marty Liquori.

Ordinarily, ignoring a climactic moment would be a sign of incompetence. But T.W.I. was faced with fog-produced technical woes. Telecasting the marathon is complex on dry, sunny days, but fog impairs the capabilities of motorcycle-carried cameras to transmit signals to helicopters hovering above.

"The greatest fear is not wind, snow or rain, but fog," said Paul Bissonette, Channel 11's station manager. With the fog ceiling as low as 200 feet, signals were regularly broken up. Four of the six helicopters eventually made emergency landings. They probably should not have been up at all.

Bissonette believes the 14 minutes of women's coverage were missing because the fog killed them. "There were huge gaps of time when we could not go to a signal to a helicopter because of the cloud cover," he said.

After the 14-minute break, Channel 11 hung with the women for about two minutes, then shifted to an interview with Kagwe, which could have been saved for later, and two minutes of commercials. Hi ho! There's news going on!

Surprisingly, Bissonette said that even if there had been no fog problems, wrapping up the men's race was of greater import than Rochat-Moser's move to the lead. "We probably would have used tape of it," he said.

Bissonette could not say yesterday whether the lack of reporting on Rochat-Moser's taking the lead meant that all means of communicating to Channel 11, such as walkie-talkies that were used by spotters, were also rendered useless by the fog.

But even if the weather had downed all modes of telling us what was occurring on the women's side, tell the viewers. We knew we were missing something.

Still, the fog did not cause all of the production's problems:

¶ In a road race, knowing the time is sort of important. Viewers like to know. But Channel 11's running clock was used far too infrequently.

¶ Despite hearing how moving it is to watch the runners come off the 59th Street Bridge onto First Avenue, there was no shot of the glorious moment.

¶ Kagwe's surge to the lead at about Mile 23 was missed, swallowed by commercials. Breaks came higgledy-piggledy, as if no one paid adequate attention to the race. You can't always guess the right moment for a break, but you can guess better.

¶ Confusion between Liquori and Kathrine Switzer. From 138th Street, Switzer reported that Rochat-Moser was fading to third place. But 14 minutes later, Liquori called Rochat-Moser's lead a "surprise to me, but not to Kathrine, who said she's been running well all year." Switzer soon reinforced her surprise, saying she had no idea "fireworks" would come from Rochat-Moser.

And how much of a lead did Rochat-Moser have? Was it 11 seconds, as Liquori said? Was it 20 seconds, as a graphic said? Or was it a minute, as Liquori would later reckon, when he said Loroupe was trailing Colleen de Reuck by two minutes, "so she's three minutes off the lead." Or not long after, was the lead down to 11 seconds, as Trautwig said? That de Reuck must have some kick.

¶ PURE EMOTION Bob Fishman, the CBS director, is a cancer survivor. So directing Scott Hamilton's first performance after the skater's treatment for testicular cancer "was one of the best experiences of my life," Fishman said.

"I've been where Scott was, but to see him healthy again, to give him advice, to tell him what's ahead, well, that's as good as the job gets," Fishman said. Directing "Scott Hamilton: Back on the Ice" (tomorrow from 9-10 P.M.), "where your friend is out there, getting a standing ovation and can't get the words out of his throat, had me crying in the production truck."

Throughout the show, in which Hamilton skates to one song, Fishman said he thought of Brandon Tarkoff, the former NBC executive and a friend since their prep school days, who died recently of cancer. "A lot of the evening was spent thinking of Brandon, and about how lucky I am," Fishman said.

¶ AIRWAVES The National Football League extended the exclusive negotiating period with ABC, NBC, Fox, ESPN and TNT through Dec. 1.... NBC's pro football studio chat on Sunday between Sam Wyche and Jim Kelly about Kelly's altercation with Colts quarterback Jim Harbaugh on Oct. 25 should have been held last Sunday.... Fox Sports snared the rights to the Cotton Bowl starting in 1999.... Among the topics Marv Albert will discuss Friday with Barbara Walters on ABC's "20/20" will be reports tying him to a transvestite dancer and a slain dominatrix.... ESPN's "Outside the Lines" on sportsmanship at 7:30 tonight is worthwhile if only for the Chicago Bear linebacker Bryan Cox's discussion with eighth graders about his repeated failures to be a sportsman.

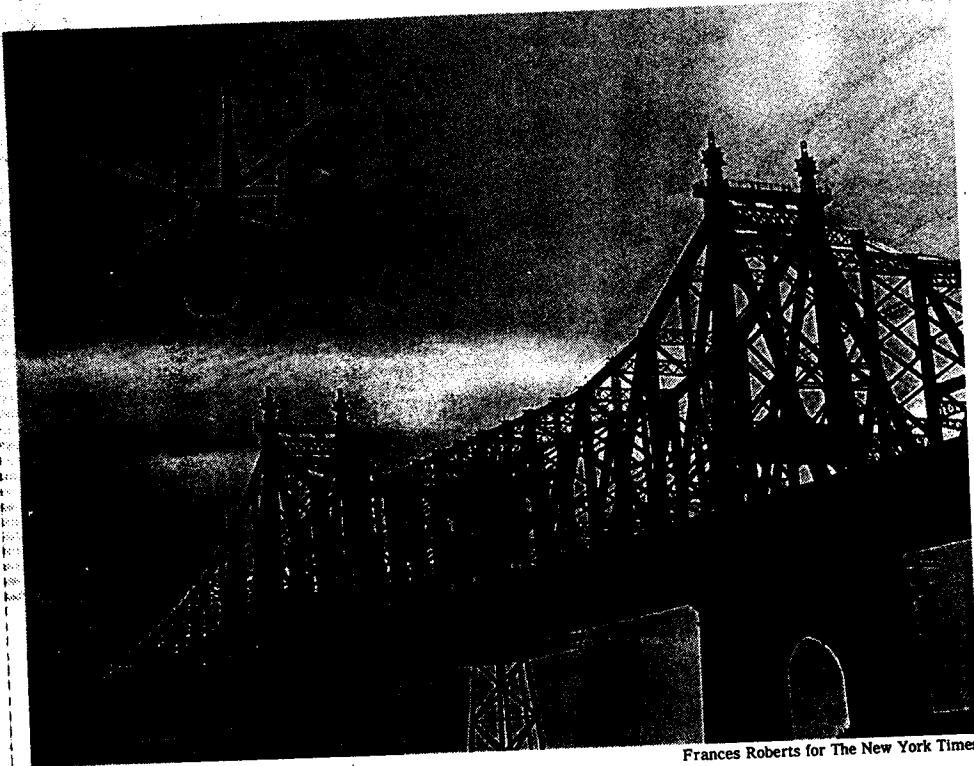
HW 499

Sunday, November 28, 1999

6 CY

The New York Times

The City



Frances Roberts for The New York Times

Manhattan residents have long been complaining about the noise from helicopters.

A Movement To Muffle News Choppers

For years, noise generated by sightseeing helicopters vexed many Manhattan residents, who complained so loudly that the city began restricting tourist flights to more remote airspaces. But there are no such restrictions for news helicopters. Now some people want to regulate those as well, saying they hover at low altitudes for long periods of time, their enormous blades whirring in the sky.

Currently, news teams at Channels 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9 use helicopters to cover breaking stories and major events from a bird's-eye perspective.

News choppers are not quiet. In a letter sent Nov. 9 to all five stations, State Senator Thomas K. Duane wrote that the noise was "the source of increasing complaints to my office as well as those of other elected officials and regulatory and oversight agencies over the last few years."

A fire on the Upper West Side last month, Mr. Duane continued, attracted three news helicopters, which hovered at an altitude of "just a few hundred feet for about an hour at 6 a.m.," disturbing the sleep of residents dozens of blocks away.

Diana Schneider, who lives near the American Museum of Natural History, said her home has been "inundated" with noise

from news helicopters. "They show up for the marathon, for the Thanksgiving Day parade, for any major event in the park," she said. "During the Garth Brooks concert, it was like a war zone."

Ms. Schneider is a member of the Manhattan Helicopter Task Force, formed by the Manhattan Borough President's office to deal with sightseeing helicopters and now news flights.

"As tourist flights abated, we began getting more complaints about news choppers," said Lisa Daglian, the spokeswoman for Borough President C. Virginia Fields. "One problem is, news flights originate in New Jersey. We only have jurisdiction over flights out of New York."

Ms. Daglian said that news organizations sometimes sent representatives to task force meetings, but that no solutions had yet been found. Among the ideas proposed are restrictions on altitude and limits of when and for how long news helicopters can hover over residential areas. Another is to pool aerial coverage.

Executives at all five stations said they were willing to meet with community leaders on noise issues but added that pool coverage was highly unlikely because each station sent a reporter and camera operator aloft.

Bart Feder, news director for Channel 7 Eyewitness News, said that "wherever possible, we tell them not to hover over a specific area longer than necessary, and if they can, to stay over a park or water." As for the hours, he pointed out that Channel 7 has a 5 a.m. newscast, but that "we never fly before six."

DAVID KIRBY

HWC 500

VOL. 52, NO. 52

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, DECEMBER 9, 1999

Quiet skies may be just over the horizon

Last week, Phil Craft, a spokesperson for Maloney, said the congresswoman sent a note to FAA Administrator Jane Garvey, requesting a meeting to discuss the implications of the recent change in the law and to help develop a plan regarding helicopter noise.

More than half of those flights start at the 30th Street heliport, slated to close sometime in the year 2001. The displaced traffic is expected to move to heliports in lower Manhattan.

HWC 501

Medical Report on Gore Finds Him in 'Outstanding' Condition

By LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN

A routine checkup performed last May 7 at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., by a panel of military and civilian doctors showed that the 51-year-old Mr. Gore had only minor medical problems. He had a mild high-frequency hearing loss. It does not interfere with normal conversation and has not changed since his last previous hearing test, in 1985. Because the hearing loss is possibly related to exposure to loud noises from aircraft, doctors have advised Mr. Gore to wear ear plugs at airports and helipads. The vice president uses them periodically, Dr. Tubb said.

HNC 502

DAILY NEWS

Helicopter noise called peril to public health

Wednesday, January 12, 2000

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By CHRISENA COLEMAN
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A New York-based environmental group released a study yesterday that concluded helicopter noise in the city is linked to health problems.

In its 57-page report, the Natural Resources Defense Council said the type of noise caused by helicopters is linked to serious health problems in New Yorkers, including cardiovascular and sleep disorders, anxiety and impaired learning ability in children.

According to the study, titled "Needless Noise: The Negative Impacts of Helicopter Traffic in New York City and the Tri-State Region," there are not enough regulations in place to monitor helicopter noise, and it is putting the health of New Yorkers at risk.

"We found out that helicopters are very underregulated," said council spokeswoman Carolyn Cunningham, who wrote the report. "New York City has the highest helicopter traffic in the country, and the residents are severely impacted."

The report says there are no emission standards for helicopter engines and that their emissions go unabated and uncontrolled.

Council officials said the city should work toward decreasing the city's sightseeing helicopter flights and eventually ban them, because they are not necessary and are bad for the environment.

"New York City is the most heavily helicopter-trafficked area in the country, with more than 140,000 flights yearly during the 1990s," said Richard Kassel of the resources defense group. "Clearly, now is the time for the city and the individual heliports to decrease noise and protect the public."

The mayor's office today is expected to set up a helicopter task force to look into the matter.

not look at helicopters. However, there were noise complaints on record from residents who did not like helicopters in their neighborhood, which prompted the latest study.

She said helicopters are not being forced to comply with noise and pollution regulations. The council said there is no provision in the Clean Air Act regulating pollution from aircraft.

"There is an urgent need for noise relief," said Cunningham.

task force to look into the matter. But the environmental group said the city's helicopter use master plan, released in the fall, understates the effects of increased numbers of helicopter overflights on the environment and public health. The group urged city officials to decrease the helicopter noise in an effort to protect the public.

Cunningham said the Council had done two studies about air pollution in the area but did not take helicopter noise into account.

"Helicopter noise is annoying because of blade slap and low-frequency noise that results in building vibration."

She said residents also should be concerned about potentially harmful toxins released into the air by helicopters.

City Councilwoman Christine Quinn (D-Chelsea) said she has received all sorts of complaints from constituents about helicopter noise.

"Helicopter noise is an enormous problem in my district," said Quinn. "It is one of the chief complaints that I have heard since I took office. The noise is keeping their children up at night and causing their buildings to vibrate."

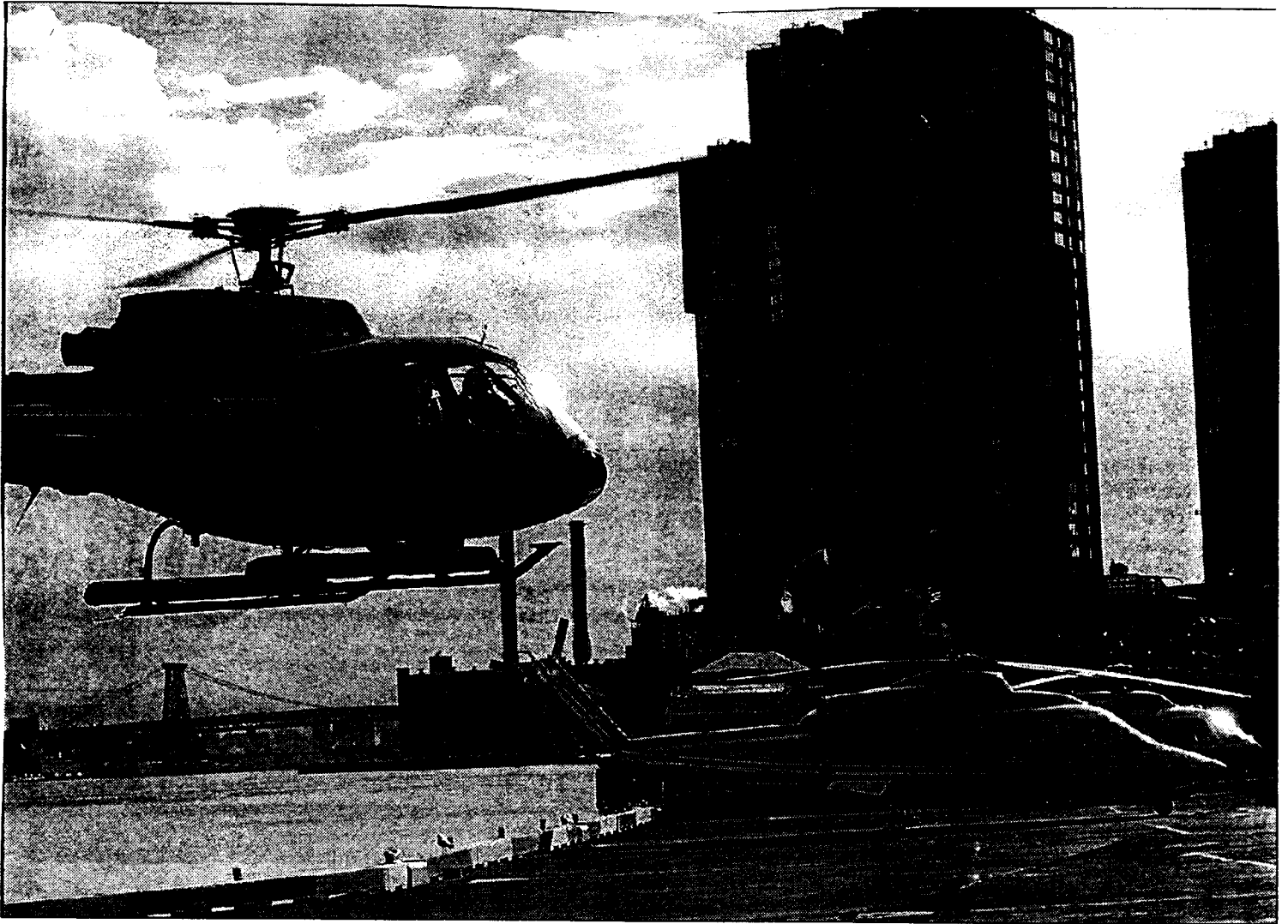
She said the industry has not been regulated but that she hopes the situation will be rectified.

"This report is enormously helpful to me," she said. "It further proves what people have been telling me all along."

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Wednesday, January 12, 2000

HWC 503



EARACHE

ANDREW SAVULICH DAILY NEWS
Helicopters landing at the East River Heliport at 34th St. are one source of numerous noise complaints by neighbors.

HWC 504

Making Noise About Noise

Environmentalists say rumble from helicopters can damage health

By Ben Upham

Helicopter noise, an issue that has smoldered in city neighborhoods for years, has once again hovered onto the news horizon, with an environmental watchdog linking the noise to "serious health problems."

A Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) study, which has been in the works for three years, states helicopter noise can cause cardiovascular disorders and anxiety.

Just two days after the report was released, the city's Economic Development Corporation Helicopter Committee had its inaugural meeting to discuss the issue.

According to a separate report released by the committee last fall, helicopter flights in New York are expected to rise 83 percent by 2017, from 138,000 in 1996 to 253,000. Complaints have been rising in recent years, the report stated.

Community residents have been agitated over this issue for many years. Complaints by residents on the East Side led to the closing of the East 60th Street heliport.

Underlying the controversy over helicopters is the FAA's plans to overhaul air traffic patterns nationwide, the first redesign in more than 30 years, officials said.

Because local municipalities do not have authority to regulate airspace, any changes to helicopter regulations will have to be taken up at the federal level.

The FAA held a public meeting on Tuesday in Manhattan to solicit public comment on the flight pattern overhaul, which will not be completed until 2004 or 2005. The following morning, officials from the FAA joined the city's helicopter committee to discuss local solutions to the noise problem.

The report by the NRDC recommended more federal oversight of helicopters and their operators, including establishing noise thresholds like the ones required for airplanes. According to La-Verne Parris of the NRDC, the group would like to see some of its recommendations taken up by the FAA.

Jim Beters, a spokesperson for the FAA Eastern Region, said, "If the NRDC submits the report to us as a proposal to be included in the airspace redesign project, we will look at it and study it and see if anything can be incorporated into the airspace redesign."

Joy Held, who formed the Helicopter Noise Coalition of New York City in 1997 after experiencing helicopter noise firsthand, said choppers "have a sound like a pneumatic drill."

After a couple of days of constant noise, Held said, she was on the verge of a breakdown. "I was walking around crying, I was a complete mess," she recalled. Her coalition wants to ban all flights from New York City, except for emergencies.

In New York City, the new Helicopter Committee will be the primary vehicle for community complaints. Already, the committee has almost eliminated sight-seeing tours over New York, and has gotten heliport operators to agree to document the types of craft using their facilities.

Committee officials said the next step is to work with the FAA to implement improvements at the federal level. ■

HWC 505

19 Marines Die in Crash Of Trouble-Plagued Craft

By ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON, April 9 — A Marine Corps aircraft in the final stages of its introduction crashed in Arizona on Saturday night, killing all 19 marines on board and renewing questions about its safety.

The MV-22 Osprey plunged from the sky and exploded at a small regional airport in Marana, Ariz., 15 miles northwest of Tucson, as it was preparing to land, said a marine spokesman, Capt. Rob Winchester. The Osprey is a technology hybrid with rotors that swivel so that it can take off like a helicopter but cruise like a turboprop commuter plane.

This was the third crash of an Osprey in the past decade.

The cause of the accident is under review. Military investigators were dispatched to the scene from Yuma, Ariz., where the flight originated, and Washington.

The Osprey that crashed and a second one were conducting a night training mission about 9 p.m. local time, simulating the evacuation of civilians. Most of the 4 crew members, who were using night-vision goggles, and 15 other marines who were killed had been stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Firefighters at the scene said that eyewitnesses reported seeing the aircraft head "straight downward," Katy Heiden, a spokeswoman for the Northwest Fire District, was quoted by The Associated Press as saying.

Controversy has dogged the Osprey program since its inception in 1981. The Marine Corps has championed the Osprey as a faster, larger and more flexible replacement for its Vietnam-era CH-46 Sea Knight transport helicopters.

Marine commanders envision the Osprey as the ideal long-range aircraft over the next 25 to 50 years for ferrying marines from Navy ships into combat zones, humanitarian operations or rescue missions.

Built jointly by Bell Helicopter Textron and the Boeing Company, the Osprey can reach more than 400 miles per hour and 25,000 feet. It is designed to carry up to 24 people or external loads of 10,000 pounds.

But at \$44 million, the Osprey has drawn sharp criticism from many

military analysts for its steep cost as well as its safety record. A report by the General Accounting Office determined in 1990 that the Osprey was too heavy and vibrated excessively in early tests.

President George Bush, on the advice of Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney, tried to kill the program in 1991. But Congress kept it alive.

Builders say modifications in the original design have made today's Ospreys lighter and safer. President Clinton eventually authorized buying up to 458 planes for the Marines, Air Force and Navy, with 360 of them going to the Marines.

Two other Ospreys have crashed during the program's development. One nonfatal crash, in Delaware in 1991, was attributed to wiring problems in the gyroscope system, which keeps the aircraft flying level. In the second accident, in Virginia in 1992, all seven people on board were killed after an engine caught fire.

The Osprey that crashed on Saturday was one of four based at the Marine Corps air station in Yuma. The planes were conducting their final test flights before being assigned to the first operational Osprey squadron, in New River, N.C.

The final testing phase was originally scheduled to be completed in late May or June, but Marine officials said this weekend's accident could delay that. The Marines today temporarily suspended test flights of the remaining three Ospreys in Arizona and a another one in North Carolina pending the crash investigation. The first full squadron of 12 aircraft was to be ready by January 2001.

Congressional supporters today defended the aircraft. "It's certainly premature to think this accident will have serious impact on the program," Representative Curt Weldon, a Pennsylvania Republican who is one of the Osprey's staunchest backers, said in a telephone interview.

In a statement released by the White House, President Clinton said, "This terrible loss of life is a reminder of how many men and women in the nation's military put their lives at risk, each and every day, so that we might be a free people."

National Report

The New York Times

A16

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TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2000

Administration Plans Forest Road Ban

An Effort to Increase Protection for a Quarter of National Land

By DOUGLAS JEHL

WASHINGTON, May 8 — A draft proposal from the Clinton administration to safeguard national forests from development would bar road building across nearly one-quarter of those lands but would not immediately rule out future logging or off-road vehicle activity.

The proposal, which was outlined today by Forest Service officials, is intended to flesh out a pledge that President Clinton has portrayed as a central part of his legacy. But some environmentalists said it fell short of their hopes and warned that it would leave some land open to exploitation.

The plan was described by Forest Service officials in advance of an announcement on Tuesday. It will be reviewed by the administration after a comment period that is to include 300 public meetings in the next two months, and advocates on both sides of the issue said they held out hope that it would be revised.

The agriculture secretary, Dan Glickman, who oversees the Forest Service, called the draft plan an important step toward preserving "among the last and best pristine lands in America."

Mr. Glickman said the draft was "a balanced proposal." But he added, "It's clear to us that any good proposal can be improved upon."

The idea of putting so much forest land off limits to roads has been strongly opposed by powerful lawmakers from some Western states, who contend that it would deal a heavy blow to the timber industry.

But the administration's plan would bypass those critics by using administrative rule changes that do not require Congressional approval.

Mr. Clinton first outlined the initiative in a speech last fall, and it is the subject of intense debate on Capitol Hill, where Senator Larry E. Craig, Republican of Idaho, dismissed it today as an unfair "end run."

The Forest Service proposal, in the form of a draft environmental impact statement, provides the first details on the administration's plan. A plan that the agency named among several alternatives as its favored approach would immediately bar

road building in virtually all of the large, unprotected roadless areas in the forest system, spanning a total of 43 million acres in 39 states.

The 155 national forests and grasslands that would be affected include Lewis and Clark National Forest in Montana, Tahoe National Forest in California, Olympic National Forest in Washington and White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire.

But the one forest explicitly exempted from the proposal is the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, the nation's largest, where conservation efforts have been opposed by Alaska's Congressional delegation.

Under the proposal, no decision about whether to set aside roadless areas in the Tongass would be made until at least 2004, when plans for the

ago crisscrossed with roads.

The administration plan would cover most of the rest, which is listed by the Forest Service as roadless areas but where road construction has never been totally ruled out. Congressional approval would have been required to formally designate any of the land as wilderness, and the opposition from the Western lawmakers has prompted the administration's effort to act on its own.

The administration officials who outlined the draft proposal spoke only on the condition of anonymity, saying they did not want to upstage announcements scheduled for Tuesday in Washington and Phoenix by Secretary Glickman and Mike Dombeck, the Forest Service chief.

The Forest Service weighed several alternatives to protect the roadless areas, administration officials said. The officials said at least one of those plans would have gone further than the one the agency chose, by ruling out logging. The recommended ban on road building alone was based on the belief that "road construction represents the single greatest threat to the social and ecological values of roadless areas," a Forest Service official said.

The official said the road ban would have a broad effect because it would make logging and other activities extremely difficult. One official estimated that the approach would reduce future logging by 70 percent in what are now roadless areas.

But environmentalists said that unless logging and off-road vehicle traffic was explicitly prohibited in the final plan, helicopter logging and other activities could spill areas that deserved total protection.

The timber industry has long opposed efforts to put broad tracts of forest off limits to roads and logging. But a top official said today that the industry expected some form of the broader protection to be put in place.

"We're not resigned to it getting through without a fight, but I think the odds are that it will get through," said the official, V. Henson Moore, president of the American Forest & Paper Association and a former congressman from Louisiana.

Part of a promise 'to protect all this before it's too late.'

forest come under review.

In laying out the administration's approach last October, near one such forest area in Reddish Knob, Va., Mr. Clinton vowed "to protect all this before it's too late."

But in interviews today, environmentalists criticized the administration's approach. Ken Rait, director of the Heritage Forests Campaign, a Portland, Ore., organization that works for forest protection, said he had hoped the administration would draft a tougher policy that "completely safeguards these forests."

"We are hopeful that the final policy will measure up to the vision that President Clinton laid out last October," Mr. Rait said.

About 34 million acres, or 18 percent, of national forest land has been set aside by Congress as wilderness areas, which are off limits to development and on which roads, logging and off-road vehicles are banned. About 50 percent of national forest land is open to logging or was long

HNC
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The New Rotary Club

Heli-commuting carries busy executives above the fray

By Paul Burnham Finney

WHEN MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT Richard Ordowich leaves his office at STS Associates in Princeton, New Jersey, to meet a client in lower Manhattan, he drives seven minutes to Trenton Mercer

Airport, straps himself into a four-seat Robinson R44 helicopter, and pilots it to the Wall Street Heliport. Instead of a grueling two-hour drive in stop-and-go traffic on the New Jersey Turnpike, the trip is just a 20-minute flight.

Coast to coast, top managers are turning to helicopters to avoid traffic tie-ups. Many major corporations now include choppers in their business-aircraft fleets, according to the Helicopter Association International.

With five busy heliports in New York City and dozens of heliports and helipads in its suburbs, the New York metropolitan area is the world's hottest helicopter market (followed by Tokyo and São Paulo, Brazil). Companies use the versatile craft to shuttle executives between Manhattan and exurban offices in Westchester County and southern Connecticut as well as to and from airports.

"Let's say you're at corporate headquarters in Stamford and have to get to JFK," says Bill deDecker, a partner with Conklin & deDecker Associates, which tracks aircraft usage. "The typical flight to Europe leaves at 6 or 7 P.M. You're looking at a traffic nightmare—unless you fly over it."

What's making choppers

more affordable is the concept of fractional ownership, already commonplace with

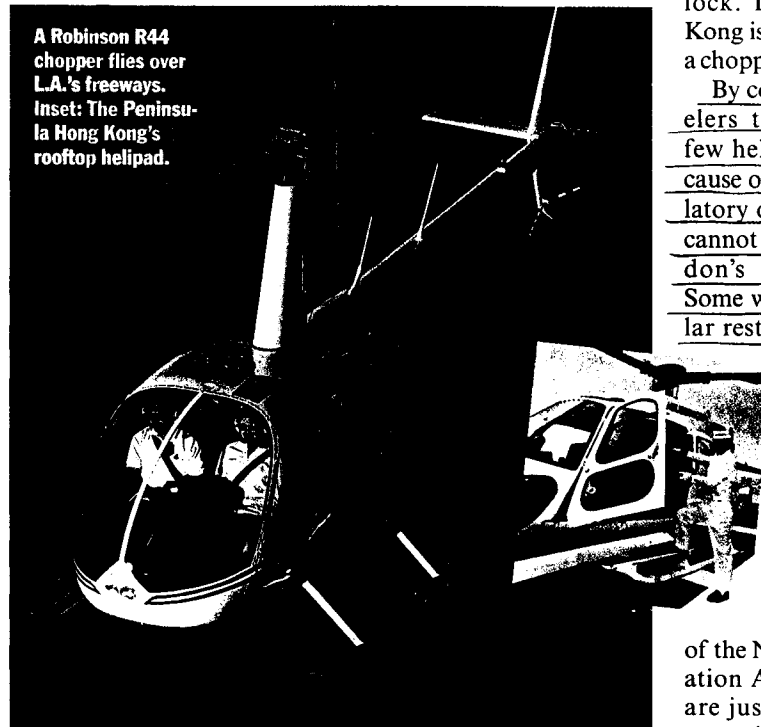
their money back by avoiding having executives caught in traffic jams. At Corrugated Synergies International in Renton, Washington, Chairman and CEO Hans G. Koch got fed up with long ferry rides across Puget Sound and Seattle's rush-hour snarls, so he had his company buy a

and other cities barely have room for runways, but there's plenty of space for helipads," says Barney Byard of Aviation Data Service in Wichita. In Bangkok, for example, The Peninsula hotel offers a ten-minute, \$300 airport commute via helicopter to bypass the city's world-class gridlock. The Peninsula Hong Kong is also trying to launch a chopper shuttle service.

By contrast, business travelers to Europe will find few helicopter services because of consumer and regulatory opposition. The craft cannot operate even at London's Heathrow Airport. Some would like to see similar restrictions in the United States: New

York has already effectively stopped rooftop helicopter landings.

In any event, the trend of choppers as taxis is gaining momentum, according to Cassandra Bosco of the National Business Aviation Association: "People are just trying to get from point A to point B as efficiently as possible." □



A Robinson R44 chopper flies over L.A.'s freeways. Inset: The Peninsula Hong Kong's rooftop helipad.

Coast to coast, managers are turning to helicopters to avoid traffic tie-ups

corporate jets. For a company that owns one, the operating cost of a helicopter (including the pilot, fuel, and depreciation) is about \$250 an hour for a two-seater. One that can carry five or six employees costs about \$800 an hour. But corporations say they earn

\$300,000 R44, took flying lessons, and cut his travel time from two hours to less than ten minutes.

On the far side of the Pacific Rim, business travelers are relying more and more on helicopters to escape urban bottlenecks. "Tokyo, Osaka,

The following are aircraft charter companies that rent, lease, and sell helicopters. The Helicopter Association International in Alexandria, Virginia, can suggest other companies in your area (703-683-4646).

- ♦ American Eurocopter in Grand Prairie, Texas: 972-641-0000.
- ♦ Robinson Helicopter in Torrance, California: 310-539-0508.
- ♦ Sikorsky Helicopters in Stratford, Connecticut: 203-386-4000.

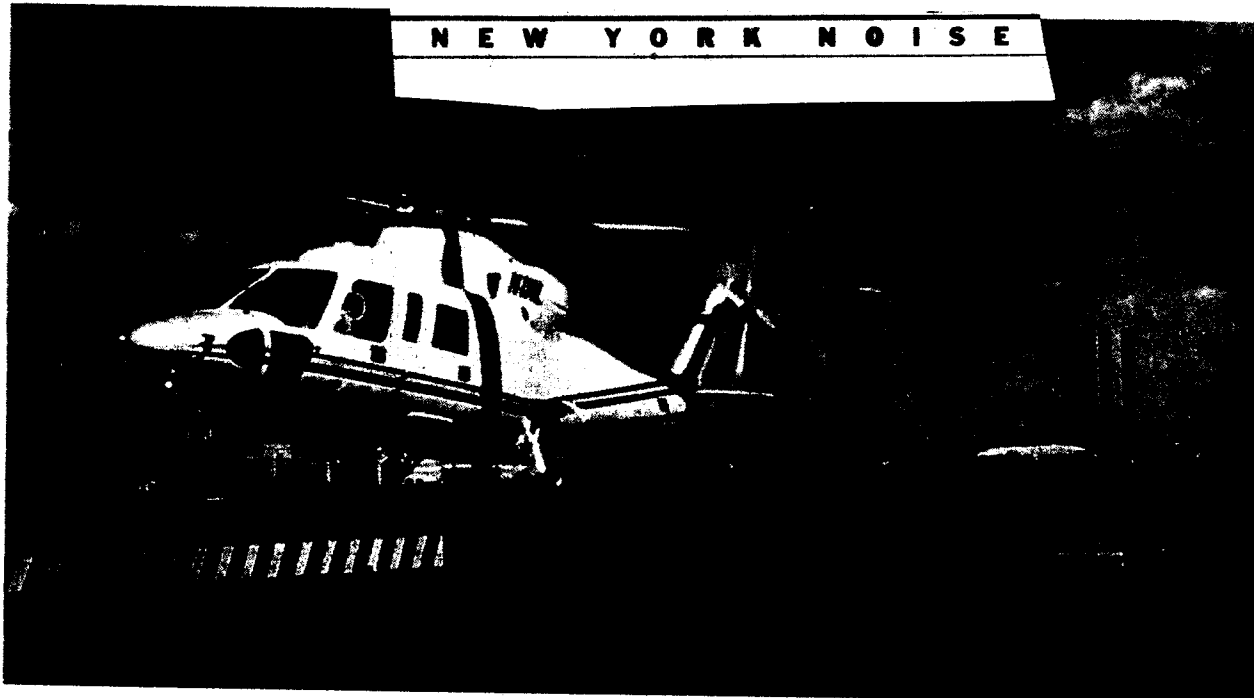
Ticker Tape Most business travelers feel they have less control over their free time on the road than they did 5 years ago.

The New York Times

The City

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Sunday, September 24, 2000



Gary Dunkin for The New York Times

Helicopters like this one at the heliport terminal on East 34th Street, are the subject of many complaints.

Measuring That Whirring Sound Just Above

For years, New Yorkers have complained about helicopter noise to just about anyone who would listen. Right now, they have the attention of the federal government, and rattled residents living near helicopter routes are giving officials an earful.

Last spring, Congress authorized financing for the Federal Aviation Administration to study the effects of nonmilitary helicopter noise on densely populated areas. The study includes taking 24-hour decibel readings around the city and soliciting public comment. The study was proposed by Representative Carolyn Maloney, who said her office had received many complaints from her district, which includes parts of Queens and

the Upper East Side.

Unlike fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters do not come under air traffic control. They operate under "visual flight rules," with no stated minimum altitude. There are no required routes, only "recommended" paths that pilots follow voluntarily, though not exclusively, critics say. The F.A.A. does not even keep track of the number of helicopter flights in the metropolitan region.

"This study is badly needed," Ms. Maloney said. "It is the first step toward bringing greater regulation to the helicopter industry." She said much of the traffic came from "superfluous flights carrying tourists, business people or news crews."

She said helicopter noise had increased 23 percent over Manhattan since 1991, adding that the number of helicopters crisscrossing the skies was also creating a serious safety hazard.

Statistics kept by the city on helicopter flights include only operations that take off or land at a city heliport. Those numbers have declined in recent years, mostly because some sightseeing companies have moved to heliports outside the city, though they still fly over New York on most tours.

Residents have until Oct. 20 to file their concerns about helicopter noise with the F.A.A., which has twice extended the deadline for comment. Among those expressing their views were Sheila and Irwin Susskind of Brooklyn Heights.

"There are too many flights, every 15 minutes, all day, every day," they wrote. "They are a burden to the many while a benefit to the few." They proposed establishing a minimum altitude of 2,500 feet and lower speed limits. They also called for an end to sightseeing tours.

Ms. Susskind pointed out that Brooklyn Heights, because of its geography, is a favorite short cut for corporate helicopter pilots coming up the East River.

"You can see them coming up from the harbor," she said. "And instead of following the bend in the river, and staying over water, as is the recommended route, they fly right over our house at very low altitudes."

Arlene Salac, an F.A.A. spokeswoman, said she could not comment on any proposed changes until the study was completed in March.

DAVID KIRBY

HNC 509

Sports Sunday

Sunday, September 24, 2000

Section 8

The World's Fastest Woman Still Has More Work to Do

Sydney 2000

By WILLIAM C. RHODEN

SYDNEY, Australia, Sept. 23 — By 8:25 tonight, you could virtually hear the moths breathing at Olympic Stadium.

This was the start of the long-awaited women's 100-meter final.

Sports Suddenly a booming voice penetrated the
Of silence. "Let's go, Marion!" roared C. J. Hunter,
The Times and a world-champion shot-putter himself.

This was the most electric day of track and field. Who are the fastest man and woman in the world? Maurice Greene and Marion Jones.

Tonight's victory was the first step in Jones's quest to win an unprecedented five gold medals in track and field at one Olympics. Each event will become more difficult than the previous one.

Asked if she felt relieved now that the first event was out of the way, she said: "I don't see it as a relief. To me, I'm out here having a ball. This is not a stressful time in my life. This is a very happy time in my life."

As the start of the race, Ekaterini Thanou of Greece false-started. Hunter threw his hands up. Then, with moths flying aggressively around the runners' heads, helicopters came buzzing into the area.

"It wasn't the false start that was so bad," Hunter said, "it was the damn helicopter or whatever it was."

Jones had won her heats without being pushed, had won her semifinal without being pushed. Tonight, with camera flashes slashing through the darkness in the 100-meter final, Jones decimated the field. She jumped out of the starting blocks, and by 50 meters the race was over. Her time was 10.75 seconds, and her winning margin, 0.37 seconds over Thanou, was the biggest for a man or a woman since 1952.

Over the past few days, Jones watched the Games in her apartment. She watched the joyous reaction of gold medal winners as they cried, sank to their knees, praised

Women's 100 meters

GOLD	Marion Jones Los Angeles
SILVER	Ekaterini Thanou Greece
BRONZE	Tanya Lawrence Jamaica



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Neighborhood Report

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Page 6

Council Is Asked to Act in War Of Nerves vs. Commercial Noise

Bruce Ehrmann lives in TriBeCa, across from 60 Hudson Street, a 20-story building crammed with telecommunications companies. Ask him to imitate the noise produced by its dozens of generators and air-circulation devices, all needed to maintain the high-tech equipment inside, and he will reply with a long-drawn-out "Phwoosh!"

He says the sound is a galling drone that can escalate at any time into a peace-shattering and sleep-depriving racket.

Councilwoman Kathryn E. Freed agrees. She has introduced a bill to tighten the level of allowable noise at 60 Hudson and the city's other commercial buildings.

The bill would change the way the Department of Environmental Protection determines which buildings are too noisy. Now, the department can fine a business for each piece of equipment that causes more than 45 decibels — light street traffic is about 60 decibels — to reach neighboring dwellings.

Under the bill, the department could levy a fine if the sound produced by all of a business's units measured together exceeded that level. Fines range from \$130 to \$4,200.

Ms. Freed said that the change would force businesses with noisy equipment to upgrade their mufflers and swiftly fix broken fan belts and other problems.

But Robert Getreu, a spokesman for GVA Williams Real Estate, which manages 60 Hudson, said Ms. Freed's amendment would scapegoat businesses for the generally raised noise levels in revived areas.

"It would be a tragedy to create legislation that puts major taxpayers in the city of New York out of business," he added, referring to M.C.I., Sprint and other tenants at 60 Hudson.

But those tenants may soon have to deal with a new regulation. Ms. Freed's amendment has won support from Mayor Giuliani

Shh

In Search of Silence

As their constituents complain about new sources of sonic distress, City Council members regularly propose changes to the noise code. Here are some ideas that are being considered but have not yet been formally proposed.

- Allow the city Department of Environmental Protection to measure the total noise produced in an entire commercial building instead of by individual businesses in the building, as is currently the case, when determining fines.
- Require tour buses to use headphones instead of loudspeakers or megaphones.
- Allow police officers to inspect idle motorcycles for baffles, which reduce sound and are required by law, instead of having the police measure the sound produced by an operating motorcycle, as is currently the case.

Source: Office of Councilwoman Kathryn E. Freed

and Community Board 1 in Lower Manhattan. Moreover, Councilman Stanley E. Michels, chairman of the council's environmental protection committee, is a co-sponsor. Ms. Freed said she expected the committee and the full Council to pass the amendment, all within the next few months.

JIM O'GRADY